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**STEVE  
HOLCOMBE!**

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TAKING THE EWC BY STORM

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© NUNO LARANJEIRA





# C O N T E N T S



# COMMENT

I'm pretty sure my boss must think I'm some kind of reckless hillbilly or something as he likes to hide me away any time someone important from HQ is due to visit the office. And he's probably right to do so n'all as the last time the Johnston Press CEO swung by our place I forgot what I was saying mid-sentence and ended up trying to beat it out of my head while he looked on incredulously.

So it wasn't any real surprise that when DBR was nominated for some award or other that was being dished out at some swanky shindig in London that I didn't get the invite to pop down. "Aaah, we're not gonna win anyway," is how I justified not going to myself and anyone else who asked me about it. "And besides I don't much enjoy squeezing my rapidly expanding ass into a suit at the best of times either."

But apparently I was wrong and we were going to win it and so as a result I missed out on accepting a prestigious award for the second time in my long and otherwise unillustrious career – the first being that time I won the FIM Journalist of the Year award way back in 2008. I skipped the glittering awards ceremony in Monte Carlo that time n'all and ended up regretting it as it took about three years to get my hands on the trophy by which time it was broken anyway. D'oh!

I like to think that I'd have kept things dirt bike had I been in London when the results were announced and whooped my way to the rostrum with both arms aloft before delivering a killer speech...

'First of all I'd like to thank the Lord Jesus Christ for keeping us safe in the office and DELL, HTC and Canon for giving us the right tools to do the job,' is how I'd have fired things off before adding, 'I really need to thank the IT department for keeping things running so smoothly – a big shout out to you guys – then there's Nescafe Azera for giving us the edge we need to hit our deadlines...

'Y'know [takes pretend swig from an empty can of energy drink before wiping my sweaty brow with a towel that's miraculously appeared from nowhere along with a hat emblazoned with a tyre manufacturer's logo] winning this title has been so difficult, we've been working really hard as a team and we're all super-excited to be champions. Woohoo!'

How rad would that've been?

Of course, in reality it wouldn't have gone down at all like that and I'd have been stood there banging the side of my head, trying to remember what it was I wanted to say while my company CEO looked on incredulously. You can take the boy out of Morecambe but you can't take Morecambe out of the boy...

I reckon that lots of different people have lots of different opinions as to why DBR will have won this award based on their own input into the title. Having been at DBR since the end of 2002 I personally feel grateful to every single person I've worked with at DBR Towers since then because every single one of them has added something – or had some positive influence – on the magazine that you're holding in front of you right now...

So, thanks to all of them and thanks to you for reading too! You guys really are the best...

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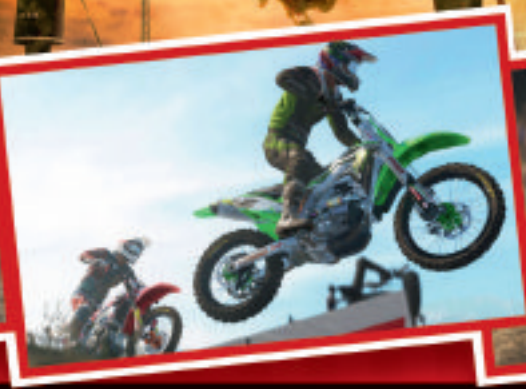






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# BRYAN

# MACKENZIE



## ACE RACER, WEATHER PREDICTOR, TRACK WORKER AND COLUMN SHIRKER — WHO SAYS MEN CAN'T MULTITASK. . .

This is just a quick note to apologise for being a slack mofo this month and failing to come up with any goods for Newshound or my column this issue. Well in one respect it's slack but in another it's actually the result of the complete opposite. I'm having a very busy time of it lately between being a dirt bike kid/pensioner and a track owner. I've got a few big races coming off in May and after the disgusting winter we've had my Duns track has had its ass kicked and aged worse than Britney Spears.

The third round of the MX Nationals will be at my place the last weekend of May which is understandably a biggie for me and I want to deliver a great track for everyone that makes the trip up to us but before that – and equally as important to me – is the North East Motocross championship (NEMXC) which is visiting the track this weekend (the first weekend in May).

The weather has been a bitch and prevented me from doing any prior work on site for months and only just started to come around now a week or two before the first race of the season at Duns. But priorities first and even more important is my racing career and I had to make amends for a howler day at round one of the Maxxis Brit champs so my focus has been on delivering at

Canada Heights of late.

BC and I spent a lot of time testing and riding getting this bitch of a season turned around and thankfully with great success. I finished on the box in second at round two and jumped from 15th to fourth in the championship in a day. That was a nice reward after a few weeks of heavy sweating.

But the commitment to achieve those results meant that my track was going the opposite way to me and it was getting older, slower and uglier and now I have less than a week to rejuvenate it before a bumper weekend. But the work I'm doing will lend itself to the MX Nationals visiting too though so it's like nobbing two birds with one conny, innit.

However being a semi professional weather man now too – and with four weather apps on my phone going flat out – by the current odds I have until this afternoon (Thursday) to complete as much of the necessary work to the track before another heavy dousing of rain blows through for a couple of days.

As a result I've been burning the candle at both ends this week because I do most of the work in the machines myself but my brother has just started to work for me and he's starting to get the hang of the machines which will unload a lot

of it from me in time and the ace up my sleeve – Baigey – pops in after work to carve it up for a couple of hours when he can. I don't take it for granted anymore the work that goes into each and every track leading up to a race weekend nowadays, especially because all the guys that do the work and run the tracks are almost always volunteers working around their own busy work schedules. For that I salute you all.

That said though I'll have to love you and leave you and again I can only apologise for the p\*sh column this time around.

Actually, wait, one more thing – I awoke this morning to see the news, mostly because my Twitter feed was full of retweets, that DBR had won an award for being globally awesome, or it might of been Nationally great or, maybe it was just locally decent... I'm not sure but either way well done team – Suttly for President!





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# STEVE

# HOLCOMBE



## IT'S ALL GO FOR THE NEW LOOK ENDUROGP WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP AND OUR STEVE'S OFF TO A FLIER...

If someone had told me I'd get three Enduro 3 class day wins and a first ever overall EnduroGP win from the opening two rounds of the 2016 Enduro World Championship I'd have laughed at them a few weeks back!

For my first season of senior class competition I'd purposely not set my sights too high. Learning, improving and generally finding my feet within the Beta factory team were the goals I'd set myself. In the best possible way I've had to reassess things after two awesome races in Morocco and Portugal.

To say that things have gone better than I ever hoped they would is a massive understatement. Where I'd have been happy with top five results I managed to come away from the opening rounds as leader of the Enduro 3 class. Making things even better, I managed to win day two in Portugal outright. It's an unbelievable, and a little surreal, feeling.

There's been a huge amount to take in in recent weeks. Dealing with pre-race nerves heading into the GP of Morocco seems like a lifetime ago now. Since then it's been about enjoying the ride and the massively different conditions we faced at rounds one and two.

The most important thing is that I've learned so much from these two races. I guess most importantly I've learned that my preparations ahead of the start of the championship were good. As a first year full-time racer that's hugely important. It felt like I was asking myself if I was doing enough or doing too much on a seemingly daily basis back in

February and March. I now know I got all the right boxes ticked.

I'm also getting used to the fact that I don't have to rush home from the races to get back to 'the day job'. Racing bikes is what I do now and easing into my new schedule isn't difficult at all. It involves a whole lot of riding, racing and cycling, with a decent amount of time to rest, relax and plan ahead.

In so many ways moving up into a 'factory' team has been easy, thanks to the fact that I'm really getting on well with everyone there. From the team manager to the mechanics to Johnny Aubert and Alex Salvini my team-mates, being at the races is fun. In a relaxed way we get our work done and still make time for each other as best we can.

Thankfully, there's no more pressure and every bit as much support within the Beta team as there was when I travelled to the races with my parents. It's good to know some things don't change even when you work your way a little further up the ladder.

The fact that the opening race in Morocco was so dry and that the second race in Portugal was so wet means that I got to show what I'm capable of in both conditions. I enjoyed both events in different ways and I'd be surprised if conditions at any other races this year will be any more extreme.

As the first year of EnduroGP – the new overall class – it's been a bit strange having a mixed class starting order at each event. But I guess like everyone else I'm getting used to

it. One thing that's tough is remembering that for me it's the Enduro 3 result that's important. Racing against Matt Phillips or Mathias Bellino is great but as Enduro 2 class riders I can't get too focused on what they're doing. But that's easier said than done when you've got a chance of fighting for the overall day win.

What was really cool to see in both Morocco and Portugal was that all the Brits rode well. Nathan Watson and Jamie and Danny McCanney are all breathing down Eero Remes' neck in Enduro 1 and it won't be long before one of them gets a first win. And the younger riders Jack Eddy, Josh Gotts and Lee Sealey are all showing what they're made of, too. It's awesome to see so many Brits on and battling for the podium.

Finally, I want to say a huge thanks to everyone who messaged me through Facebook and Instagram recently. Knowing that there's a tonne of people rooting for you back home really means a lot.

Ciao.  
Steve

*Handwritten signature: H Holcombe #70*



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# DANIEL

# GROVE



Photo by Matt Dean

## OUR FACTORY SPECTATOR TAKES IN AN AMCA RACE AND FINDS HIMSELF A NEW HERO...

I've been around this motocross game for a fair old while now and I don't know if it's because of that, or social media, or my age, that I don't really get impressed by much anymore. I'm not saying that it never happens but with the digital age that we live in we can either watch stuff as it happens live and not think much to it – Guy Martin's Wall of Death springs to mind for me but that was just the poor camera work – or it's posted on Facebook or Instagram within minutes. And with the way social media works you may see something awesome and then seconds after that scroll on down and forget all about the impressive thing that you just saw.

I've watched plenty of races in my time and I've witnessed some seriously impressive stuff. Jake Nicholls' ride at the final round of the Maxxis British Championship at Landrake in 2009 will be remembered by everyone there that day – or at least it should be. That was the day he came from dead last with no front brake to clinch 10th place in the second moto and earned second in the MX2 championship that season.

Or there's Ryan Dungey's ride at Southwick in 2011. Granted, I wasn't there that day – as it was raining – but his ride would have gone down in history as one of the greatest ever had he won the outdoor championship that year. Search for the race on YouTube and if you're lucky enough to own The Great Outdoors DVD from that season then keep hold of it!

On a much smaller scale in the grand scheme of the motocross world I did recently witness something very impressive at a local AMCA race held at Marshfield. It wasn't the investment that the venue saw at the tail end of last year with the addition of some nice fencing to modernise the place a little as well as a complete overhaul of the circuit with a few thousand tonnes of soil moved around and shaped up nicely on and off the track. The place just looks awesome now and in a way I wish I was racing on this day however when this race came around I was still getting to grips with riding a four-stroke but maybe next year I'll be better prepared.

I haven't ridden there an awful lot actually but when I have I always seem to put a decent day together. Probably because the track 'suits my style' (I hate that saying), however it really does. Long up and downhills, sweepers and off-camber corners which suit me but certainly don't suit some riders as there just aren't many tracks like this any more.

There are a few nicely shaped jumps that are a little on the small side but I'm sure they've been made this way with safety in mind. Safer because they can be ridden at any speed which in turn promotes closer racing as everyone will ride them at about the same speed and concentrate on what's in front of them rather than thinking about a jump or section that they aren't confident with.

So what did impress me at this meeting? Well, it was Luke Dean's first moto ride where he found himself dead last after being fetched off his bike on the opening lap. Now, I can't say that I know Luke all that well however as we raced the same series over the last couple of years and also back in 2009 in the DEP Two Stroke championship I saw him in passing by every now and then and had a quick chat. To be fair I've probably spoke to his dad Andy more than Luke over the years.

Luke seems to have dabbled with various championships since I first saw him ride in 2009 and even raced the EMX125 series in 2011. He's also done some stupid stuff in his time that's for sure. If you're familiar with the Foxhill track you'll remember that there used to be a pretty big and sketchy uphill triple jump up to the finish up until recently. Back then in 2011 not all of the Maxxis racers would clear this jump however Luke attempted it on a 125! Needless to say that little bike didn't pack enough ponies to get up and over the landing and he cased it big time.

Since then he's matured and this point was proved at Marshfield. I ain't too sure who he tangled with but he got ran wide, knocked off his bike and then had his bike dragged down the track a little bit. You could tell by his body language as he walked back to his bike that he was over it already but remounted and started

clicking off the laps.

I watched him practically the whole time and now that he's head to toe in Fox gear he looked a little like a Ken Roczen replica as he races a Suzuki as well. The race had some fast guys at the front and early season races always attract big entries so it probably did him a favour starting at the back and sharpening up on how to pass people as when the real races start in the AMCA Championship, if he gets a bad start, he'll be ready for the battle. There was no shouting or running people wide like I witness at practice tracks all the time but some people just love to win practice don't they? Good work champs... top job.

Anyway, just two years ago Luke would get a good start and fade pretty badly in the Expert class at the South West Premier series however by the end of 2015 he was winning races which is a vast improvement I can assure you. In this race I was watching though he was on rails passing other guys almost anywhere on the track as he worked his way to the front.

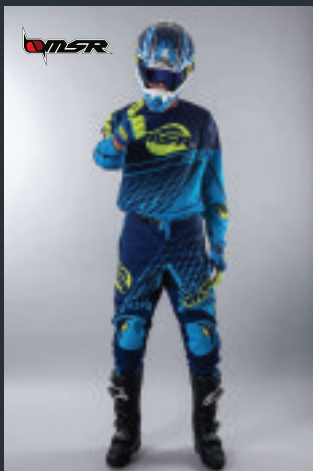
He was closing in on matey who he came together with on the opening lap rapidly and I was expecting him to return the favour in one way or another. I'm sure the Luke Dean of old would have no doubt traded some plastic but in actual fact he blew straight by him and finished the race a solid third place – just five seconds off the winner. That's impressive as the top 10 weren't slouches and it's the way he composed himself and his style on the bike that impressed me the most.

So it's safe to say that he's the full package right now which doesn't bode well for his competition this year as he goes out to defend his AMCA MX1 title and I'd go as far as saying that he's a role model for motocross racers despite his young age as when you come up to a right hander you should turn right, right?

*Daniel Grove*

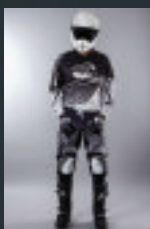
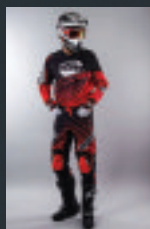
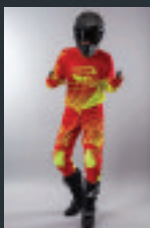
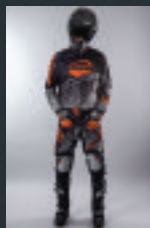


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# NIPPLES

## OUR DEADLINE DODGING HERO MAKES A MAGNIFICENT RETURN TO THE HALLOWED PAGES OF DBR...

The last couple of months have been a bit odd in terms of the start to my season. I raced Preston Docks as a pre-season race then did Lyng – the first British Championship round. After that was the first European GP of the year at Valkenswaard in Holland then I had two weekends off. This lull was due to the fact that I wasn't partaking in the four opening overseas GPs. I had intended on filling the middle weekend with the second round of the MX Nationals but it was unfortunately called off due to moisture. So as I said, it's strange as I feel like I'm still in my pre-season mode a bit.

I'm still enjoying everything though and it has given myself and the team a chance to play catch up with bike set-up as we have been a fair way behind, through no fault of anyone. Lyng went pretty well for me – I qualified well although I struggled a bit in the first race with an average getaway from the concrete meaning I was just inside the top 10. I sat behind my mate EBB for the whole race, being too nice I guess, as the track was quite hard to pass. The second one was much better and I found my old self a bit and was enjoying the track so much in the second half of the race when it got a bit rougher.

Valkenswaard was always going to be a learning weekend for me and overall I think it was a great success. On paper it wasn't as all I showed was a 18th in the first race and that was it. We whittled out a few teething problems with our bike in the warm ups, then I had a solid ride in the qualifying race and got 14th.

On race day I got a decent start but hit Simpson's bike on lap one when he was blind side of a severely rutted jump. On TV it looks crazy that I didn't see him but I was in a long ass rut behind Desalle and at the last minute he swerved and it was too late for me. I got going near the back and had a terrible race myself –

managing to get three points – but I hated every minute of it.

This was basically due to my forks and shock working so badly together. It was fine when the track was fast and rough in qualifying but with the downpour prior to the main races the track was 20 seconds a lap slower and much more technical.

I was also really nervous which is rare for me. I guess it was a mix of things, the bike had unnerved me a bit and to be honest I couldn't put my finger on what to do with it in between the races. With it being my first GP for a while it all built up into a nervous Yak and I found it impossible to eat between the races – I managed a cup of white rice that was it.

When the second race started I was half asleep. It was such a crap situation as I needed to be out there getting the race time with the boys regardless of the result but I couldn't focus at all. Later I looked at my heart rate which showed I only got to 155bpm and normally when in race mode I'm 180bpm. This showed me my blood sugar was low caused by a lack of food. But like I said, it was a good weekend, we learnt about the bike, I learnt a bit more about myself and we knew what to work on.

So since then Ian Browne – the team's chief mechanic – and myself have been over to Holland twice, testing suspension and getting some riding in on some different tracks, rough ones. We've got some different stuff to try with the motor soon too which is exciting but now that I've got a good base with the suspension I feel I can push harder each weekend.

I've had people down at my Dad's place where my track is doing some filming recently. They were an Australian couple called 404 Films who made a moto film called RIDE: WORLD ELEMENTS last year which I downloaded off iTunes ages ago and liked it. They wanted to do a piece on my team-mate Ben Watson and

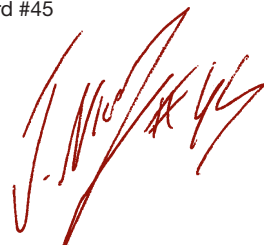
his brother Nathan who now rides world enduro and I guess they thought it would be cool to feature my track and myself in it with them so we had a mega couple of days throwing whips and chasing each other around the track and on the enduro loop too. I was well impressed with my FC 450 in the woods considering she's a full on MXer.

My track has been really good recently, JB tracks rebuilt it in November and it's now settling in and roughing up as well as being in awesome condition due to the spring weather.

We had Canada Heights a few days ago for the second round of the British. It was a real good day riding wise for me although I was let down again due to a freak mechanical on the first lap of race one putting me out of the race for two laps and meaning I scored no points. I rejoined the race once we fixed it and got into it so I was ready for race two.

I lead from the start of that one but showed a bit of rustiness on the track and couldn't hold Tommy's pace early on. Shaun got passed me about two-thirds of the way through but I held onto him and tried to make a move back pass on the last lap but couldn't quite get close enough. It was great mentally for me as I wasn't on the edge at all. I just need more races at the moment but it's okay and I'm happy with it all, my bike was working well on the rough track, hats off to the club, Richard Rose and the crew down there make it better every year.

Go Hard #45





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# NEWSHOUND

Shaun Simpson takes over the Maxxis red plate with a 1-2 at Canada Heights



## BRY'S TIED UP OUTSIDE SO SEAN STEPS UP AND FILLS HIS SLOT — WHO'S A GOOD BOY? YES, YOU ARE . . .

Words by Sean Lawless and Future7Media

Welcome to May you dastardly digglers of dirt. Your regular Newshound is busy spit-shining some surprise silverware he picked up at the Canada Heights round of the Maxxis ACU British Motocross Championship supported by Pro Clean powered by Bounty bar in association with Dorothy Perkins and presented by Pedigree™ Tasty Bites Cheesy Nibbles with Cheese and Beef this month. All of which means you're stuck with me so apologies in advance...

It doesn't take a genius to see how important it is to bring new sponsors into the sport and then give them a shedload of exposure but am I the only one getting increasingly bored with the long-winded titles some championships are currently rocking?

Latest addition to the club is the AMCA British Motocross Championship powered by Datatag and supported by Dunlop. Well done on bringing in the sponsorship dollars whoever swung the deal but seriously? What's

wrong with a single title sponsor like they do Stateside? Personally, I think it's a keeping up the Joneses dealio – the longer the better. Remember, it's not the size of the ship, it's the motion in the ocean – well, that's what I keep telling myself. Anyway, that's my current #petpeeve – a bit like when my name's spelled Shaun instead of Sean...

Seeing as we've touched on Deep Fry Bry's great performance at Canada Heights I figure now's as good a time as any to move onto the Maxxis and take a quick look at what went down in Kent...

Starting with the big boys, Tommy Searle was oh-so lucky to come away pretty much unscathed from his first race, first turn crash. If he'd bailed any harder the pile-up footage would've been branded NSFW – certainly, the last time I saw anyone go down as hard on my work PC the company IT dept got involved and things went south very quickly.

Tommy made amends in race two and I can't help thinking after all his injuries in recent years

maybe being used as traction by a quarter of the pack – and not getting hurt – is a sign that his luck's changing for the better. I hope so. The crash caused a massive pile-up which unfortunately left Ash Wilde with a dislocated shoulder. If you watch it on YouTube it actually looks like the Geartec Yamaha rider's been taken out by a sniper. Who was the mystery man on the grassy knoll?

Sean, sorry, Shaun Simpson was his usual impressive self to take full advantage of Tommy's misfortune to secure the overall and regain the MX1 red plate and despite getting DQ'd for outside assistance in the opener, Ipswich's #1 cheese ranger Jake Nicholls is obviously getting back to top form. How good will it be if after getting a few more GPs under his belt The Reverend finds some extra speed and starts giving Tommy and Sean, sorry, Shaun the willies?

Scuba Steve Clarke played a blinder – no doubt about it – and his two wins weren't entirely a big surprise. Consistency will win the



Steven Clarke goes 1-1 to take over the lead in the MX2 title hunt



## GP A GO-GO!

### MATT PHILLIPS TAKES EARLY LEAD IN EWC SUPERCLASS

Two rounds in and Sherco's Matt Phillips leads the EnduroGP World Championship. In stark contrast from the dust of Morocco to the mud fest that was Portugal, Phillips has ended the opening four days of competition as the early leader.

Claiming an outright day win in Morocco and then in Portugal has seen the Sherco rider build a small lead of four points. Tied for second overall are both Mathias Bellino (Husqvarna) and Beta's Steve Holcombe.

Bellino was the early pace setter with victory on day one, but a shocker in the Portuguese mud on day two hurt his points tally. Holcombe is proving the revelation of 2016 with a win in Portugal to draw him level with Bellino.

## DK ON TOP!

### KNIGHTER WINS EXTREME RAVINES

David Knight has claimed another win – and extended his championship lead – in the British Extreme Enduro Championship with victory at round three in Extreme Ravines, Helmsley.

On song in Yorkshire, Knight led home a strong field of riders to win by over four minutes. Shaking off the jetlag having just arrived home from Brazil and the Red Bull Minas Riders, Graham Jarvis swapped the Brazilian dust for Yorkshire mud to finish second.

Rising extreme newcomer Billy Bolt gave a strong challenge to both Knight and Jarvis early on but slowed his pace in the latter stages due to a flattened exhaust pipe eventually taking third.

Chad Reed's all set to rock up at Matterley Basin for the British GP



MX2 title this year so Steve, Marty Barr, James Dunn and the other title contenders need to use their noggins along with their right wrists.

On the subject of Jimmy Dunn, his Hitachi REVO Husqvarna team has elevated him to MX2 GPs as a fill-in for his injured team-mate Ben Watson (more on him a little later). It was two years ago at Canada Heights that James wrecked his knee and almost his career so to see him joint points leader with Clarke and about to make his GP debut is proper heart-warming stuff.

And how good was it to see Mel Pocock in action at Canada Heights after over a year out? Any suspicions that he might take his comeback a little gingerly were dispelled by a race two fifth. Good work Mel!

On the world stage the Brits are holding their own but – dare I say it – under-performing a tad. In MXGP Sean, sorry, Shaun sits eighth after battling illness and crashes and Tommy's in 10th following his own misfortunes. We all know Max Anstie is the second-fastest rider in

MX2 but after his inactive off-season he's still playing catch-up with the bike and is currently 10th n'all.

And it's bad times for Ben Watson who broke bones in his foot in Argentina. Initially a swift comeback was predicted but the injury is worse than first thought so he's currently out of action. Fingers crossed his fill-in rises to the occasion until Ben's back in the saddle.

The big buzz at the moment is that Chad Reed is going all Euro on us and coming across for the British MXGP at Matterley Basin on June 19 and then extending his stay for Italy the weekend after.

The last time (I think) we saw Speedy Reedy in GP action was when he pinched second in the 250s at the last round off Gordon Crockard in 2001 and I'm not alone in eagerly-anticipating his return. Kevin Strijbos is the party pooper here having claimed the Aussie's trademark #22 but with #122 and #221 both up for grabs all he needs is a single strip of black electrical tape and the job's a good 'un...

Ash Wilde is sidelined after a crazy first turn crash with close friend Tommy Searle







# Martin Lampkin 1950 – 2016

~ AN APPRECIATION BY JACK BURNICLE ~

I first saw Martin Lampkin in action as an 18 year-old at Hutton Conyers, near Ripon in North Yorkshire. It was May 25 1969 and Martin was racing his brother Alan's factory C15 250 BSA at a local motocross meeting. Also on the start line was his lifelong friend, rival and contemporary Malcolm Rathmell on a works Greeves.

While Rathmell proved a supremely gifted 'crosser, Martin always dismissed himself as a 'rubbish scrambler'. Back then they'd ride trials, scrambles, grass tracks and what were called mountain grass tracks – hilly, fast affairs that climaxed local Yorkshire shows on Saturday evenings at places like Malham with terrific entertainment and star quality riders.

Both 'Big Mart' and 'Rastus' went on to achieve fame as trials riders, Rathmell winning the last European title in 1974 before Martin pipped him by a single point to claim the first world championship in 1975.

Martin, the youngest of three racing brothers, was born a broad Yorkshire in Silsden on December 28 1950, though only because his father Arthur Alan had left the East End of London during the blitz of 1941, eldest son Arthur buried beneath baggage in a sidecar outfit.

He knew people in Silsden and the north-east but because the former lay further south he stopped and settled there, otherwise Martin and middle son Alan could have been born Geordies. Both Arthur and Alan led successful off-road motorcycle careers with BSA. Arthur, a real all-rounder, won the British trials championship at 18 before finishing second in the 1961 European 250 motocross series and third in the inaugural world championship the following year. Arthur went on to win the 1963 Scottish Six Days Trial, the 1965 MX des Nations, the Belgian 500GP at Namur and a gold medal in the ISDT in 1966 and three Scott Trials.

Middle son Alan, affectionately known as Sid, also won the British trials championship and the Scottish Six Days so Martin's route into off-road sport was pretty much inevitable. Francesco

Bulto offered him a berth in his factory Bultaco squad and Mart duly won the 1973 European Trials championship. The world title, four Scott Trials, two more national championships and three successive SSDTs followed.

After retiring in 1984 Martin became a publican, but his own older son Dougie would begin competing in trials within the year. He and lovely wife Isobel, herself from the eminent Hemingway trials family, went on to run a newsagency in Silsden. But with Dougie's career on a mercurial rise Martin sold the newsagents in August 1994 to concentrate on his son's world title aspirations as his minder.

I remember Doug scoffing at Mart during an intense practice session I photographed above Silsden in early '95. "Crisps were 25 pence a packet at Rip-off Lampkins, weren't they Dad?" "Yeah, helping your European championship," grinned Mart sheepishly. "2p a packet on crisps!"

They had the odd spat that day too... "Inch and a half." "Inch and a half where?" "To the right." "Well say so then!" "You're getting upset and it affects your riding. Don't get mad at it!"

Back then, Martin's passion for his chosen sport meant he harboured reservations about the direction it was taking. "There was nothing wrong with what Malc and I did Jack," he explained to me that day in Silsden. "There were quite a few indoor trials at the end of the '70s where you could stop and balance. I couldn't, so I kept going forwards!"

"These days, six can do the trick riding, six or eight think they can and the rest haven't a bloody chance. It isn't my place to say a sport isn't right when it's changing for so few people and I don't know the answer. But I'm ecstatically happy with what I'm trying to do. I'm at Dougie's beck and call, devoting more time to this than I did when I was riding myself. You see Dougie couldn't come here and practise this stuff on his own. That is how the sport has altered..."

This devotion certainly worked. For the next hugely successful decade and a half Martin's broad Yorkshire bawl became an intoxicating

sideshow at world trials, echoing through sections both indoors and out. Memorable phrases were born: the aforementioned "inch and a half right (or left!)", "perfect at the back", "big effort"; "CONFIDENCE!" Doug admitted that he was lost without his father's emphatic instructions booming out behind him. They won 12 world titles in all.

Martin also launched the best indoor trial in the world at Sheffield, his challenging and endlessly creative sections driving the sport forward during the past 20 years. We knew how unwell he must be when he couldn't be there early this year.

He was immensely proud of his son's achievements, most especially the European championship, clinched in 1993 at the final round despite the pain of a broken wrist. His eyes would still well up years later as he recalled that heroic moment. Because despite the bluff exterior Mart was a generous, warm-hearted bloke.

He'd always endured a prickly relationship with Manxman Steve Colley, one of Dougie's greatest rivals in his early days. But when we were doing indoor trials demos at the Dirt Bike Show a few years back Colley, ever the showman, stunned the crowd with an audacious leap from one section to another across a huge gap. Mart, minding in case of mishap, turned to me as the applause rang out. "That were bloody good," he remarked appreciatively.

Lampkin loved riding motorbikes. We did several trials tests for Classic Bike magazine, me shooting photographs of Martin riding old irons that usually pre-dated his own career then writing his impressions. "There was no glory attached to standing about for hours a day minding," he said. "I had my glory as a rider."

He was moved and amazed that fans from the old Eastern Bloc, whence he used to venture on long road trips to world rounds, still stayed in touch, sending letters, cards and photographs to Silsden. Martin Lampkin was a genuine global hero, admired the world over for his exploits as a rider and his continuing massive presence as promoter, minder and larger-than-life character. He'll be hugely missed.





After topping his class at the season opener Jack Eddy misses round two altogether with a hand injury



Manxman Danny McCanney runs fifth in E1 after two rounds



Jamie McCanney sits joint second in Enduro 1 with rookie Nathan Watson

The newly named EnduroGP World Championship is now up and rolling and already it's proving to be a little bit bloody awesome. It might be too early to say that Britain could have a couple of world champions this year but if the first four days of racing are anything to go by then chances are high.

At the pointy end of the EnduroGP standings – that's the overall classification of Enduro 1, Enduro 2 and Enduro 3 combined – Steve Holcombe is off to a flying start tied in second overall, absolute enduro rookie Nathan Watson is eighth and both Jamie and Daniel McCanney are 12th and 16th overall. So very good times indeed.

But what about Holcombe? Stepping up to the senior ranks with a bang, Holcombe has consistently outclassed his team-mates Alex Salvini and Johnny Aubert. Just the "kid on the

team" Holcombe's showing himself to be a little bit more than that. Landing his debut EnduroGP win at a rain soaked Portugal has set him up as one of the favourites to watch in 2016.

Likewise, Nathan Watson is another rider outperforming most of his more experienced team-mates. Clearly a fast leaner, Watson is currently the second best factory KTM rider behind Taylor Robert - another EnduroGP rookie. Also relishing the muddy conditions in Portugal Watson secured his first overall podium with third.

Within the Enduro 1 class he's joint second with Jamie McCanney. Never off the podium with three thirds and one second place result ensures Watson is looking very good indeed.

Making it a British affair in E1, Jamie is sharing the limelight with Watson. Working his way back up to race speed following a batch

of winter injuries, McCanney has done enough to pick up three podium results but with a few more miles under his belt he'll no doubt get stronger.

Rounding out the top five in E1, Danny McCanney is another rider trying to find his feet following injury. Needing the winter to build his knee back into shape after surgery last October, McCanney has got notably stronger with each day.

In the Youth ranks the Union Jack flew on day one in Morocco with Jack Edmondson picking up the 125cc class win. He backed that up with second on day two. But a knock to the hand prevented him from starting in Portugal. That loss dropped him from first to fifth overall but with the Youths allowed to drop a couple of their worst scores, he's got time on his side to claw his way back up the rankings.



THE TRUE ADVENTURES  
OF DAREDEVIL

# EVEL KNEIVEL

14



- ROBERT CRAIG KNEIVEL  
WAS BORN IN 1938 IN  
BUTTE, MONTANA



YOUNG BOBBY KNEIVEL  
AGED 8, WENT TO A  
JOEY CHITWOOD  
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THIS EVENT INFLUENCED  
HIS LATER CHOICE TO BECOME  
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VALUES:**

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HE WAS SACKED FROM HIS  
FIRST JOB AT A COPPER MINE  
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EARTH MOVER.



EVEL GOT INTO  
PETTY CRIME...

**JUMP**



**BUTTE WRECKERS**

BUTTE POLICE NICKNAMED  
HIM **EVEL** DURING HIS  
TIMES IN THE CELLS...



WHEN I SAY  
MOVE YOU'D  
BETTER  
JUMP!

HEY...

I'D LIKE  
TO **JUMP**  
YOUR BONES



LOOKING FOR ADVENTURE,  
EVEL COMPETED IN RODEOS  
AND SKI-JUMPING COMPS.



PERHAPS HIS TIME  
IN THE ARMY  
WOULD STRAIGHTEN  
HIM OUT..?



IN 1959 HE MARRIED BUTTE  
WOMAN LINDA BORK-AFTER  
**KIDNAPPING** HER  
THREE TIMES.



EVEL WAS A RISK-TAKER WITH  
LITTLE TIME FOR SOCIETY'S  
RULES. HIS CURIOSITIES WENT  
FAR BEYOND MOTORCYCLING...

BANK  
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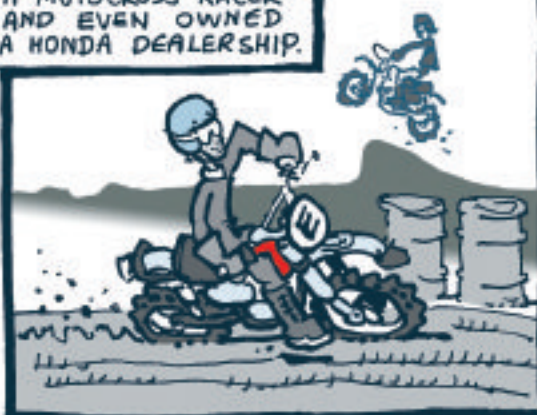
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IN 1962 HE BECAME A MOTOCROSS RACER—AND EVEN OWNED A HONDA DEALERSHIP.



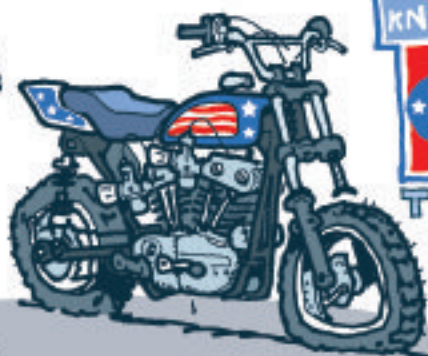
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AFTER BREAKING 433 BONES (A WORLD RECORD) EVEL KNEVEL DABBLED IN VIOLENT ASSAULT, LITIGATION, BANKRUPTCY, SOLICITING, FIREARMS OFFENCES AND MARRIAGE TO A 30-YEAR-OLD WOMAN.

ENGLEBERT HUMPERDINCK WROTE A TRIBUTE SONG FOR THE COUPLE.

EVEL'S LIFE WAS INDEED **STRANGER THAN FICTION**.

EVEL KNEVEL DIED ON 30 NOVEMBER, 2007.







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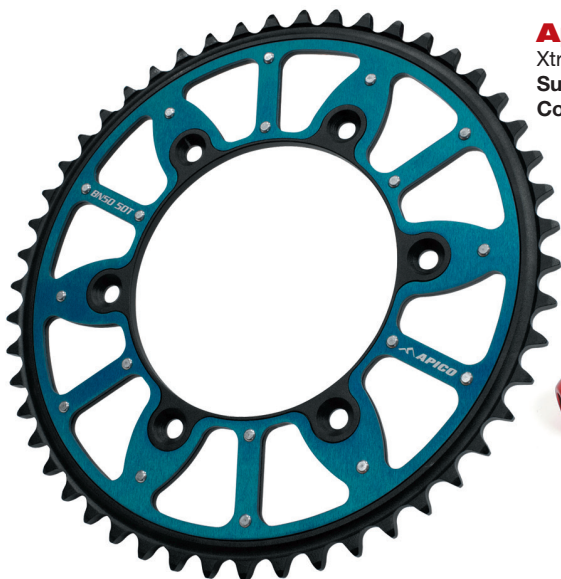
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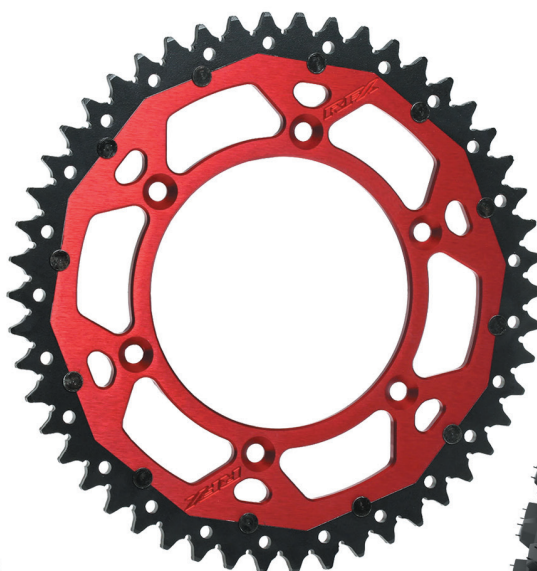


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# CONRAD MEWSE GROWING PAINS!

**LIKE MANY CHILD STARS CONRAD MEWSE LOST HIS WAY FOR A WEE WHILE BUT WITH THE HELP OF THE FACTORY HUSQVARNA TEAM - AND COACH JUSTIN MORRIS - HE'S BACK ON TRACK AND SHOWING HIS FULL POTENTIAL...**

Words and photos by Max Hind/TooFast Media Group









**T**he life of a child star can often become a tale of woe. Just look at what happened to Michael Jackson, little Macaulay Culkin and even Britney Spears. Fame and success at such an early age can potentially leave kids pretty damn messed up. I mean, have you seen pictures of Kevin McCallister lately?

The same can be said for young stars of the motocross world. Guys like Mike Alessi and Adam Cianciarulo were big names before they had even hit puberty. The risk is that kids who are thrust into the spotlight from such an early age will burn themselves out by the time they turn pro.

After doing the triple and winning the Dutch, European and world 85cc championships in 2013, Conrad Mewse was a child star in every sense of the word. He had a contract with factory KTM in his hand and that's a lot for a kid only just into his teens to deal with.

When he made the jump up into the 125 class a lot was expected of him and when he wasn't able to deliver the results that were forecast some pit pundits might have had him down as just another burnt-out kid who'd peaked on an 85.

Conrad was struggling to gel with the team and finding it difficult living in the shadow of his older team-mates. That, together with that fact that he straight-up didn't like riding a 125 two-stroke, meant that Conrad's results suffered.

So it was a bit of a shock for us when Mewse turned up with his new factory Husqvarna for the first round of the 2016 Maxxis ACU British Motocross Championship at Lyng, logged the quickest lap times in both races and finished second just behind his team-mate Max Anstie.

He then headed to Valkenswaard the following weekend and laid waste to an insanely stacked field of hungry EMX250 riders.

But while his form was maybe shocking to us it was certainly no surprise for Conrad or his inner circle and the 16-year-old proved in the space of those two weekends that he's still arguably Britain's brightest hope.

When we met up to chat with Conrad in between two of his midweek motos it was very clear that he's mature beyond his years, both physically and mentally.

In the three years since DBR last sat down to talk with Conrad he has done a lot of growing up. It's also clear that the success he earned very early on in his life hasn't affected him adversely – he's a very polite, down-to-earth and likable lad that just so happens to be good at racing dirt bikes...

**DBR:** We last sat down with you at the end of 2013 just after you won the 85cc world title. Talk us through what's been happening since then and your time on the 125...

**CM:** "I finished on the 85 after two great years and straight away went on the 125. I had a little setback before the 2014 season as I dislocated my shoulder in Dunkirk. I didn't have much time on the bike under my belt when I did come back to race the EMX 125 championship for the first year.

"For the whole of that year I wasn't fit enough, I wasn't strong enough and mentally I wasn't ready for that challenge. It was a bit of a pain because of my results in the 85s – I should have been a contender that year on the 125s but it didn't happen.

"Going into the second year on the 125 I was hoping to be at the top and I was expected to be in the top three but it just didn't go to plan again. Yeah, I had fourth in the EMX championship and second in the world championship but I wasn't happy with my results and I couldn't get the starts I needed all year. I was playing catch-up for the whole season and I didn't enjoy that. I was also living in the shadow of my two team-mates and that was frustrating me so much.

"Now I've finally made the switch to the 250 and in my head I've always thought I'd be a better 250 rider as I like to ride smooth and play with the track which is something that a 250F enables you to do. I think it's starting to show and pay off now – as you know at the first round of the EMX in Valkenswaard I went 1-1 and was really happy with that. I'm looking forward to the rest of the season now!"

Conrad motors through  
a midweek training session







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**DBR:** Do you think the success you had on an 85 put extra pressure on you when you got on the 125?

**CM:** "I don't mind it when people expect me to be at the front because I expect it of myself as well. There is a lot of pressure but I try and turn it into extra confidence. I don't think the pressure really affected me. It was just the setback in the winter that made it hard as I wasn't able to ride or do my physical training properly so I wasn't prepared and the other riders were."

**DBR:** We think it's fair to say that you surprised a lot of people at Lyng with your second place overall and posting the fastest lap in both races. Did you surprise yourself?

**CM:** "I know I should be up there with those boys and expected myself to be really. Don't get me wrong, there are a lot of fast riders at the Maxxis but last year when I was finishing like eighth and ninth I wasn't happy. Even when I had a fifth at the last race at Preston Docks it was an improvement but I still wasn't over the moon with it."

"Obviously, I've changed teams to Husqvarna

now and they've played a massive part in this. They have helped me make the step that I wanted to make. We've had a great winter, I've got a new physical trainer now – Joel Roelants – who is great to work with. Everything seems to be so good at the moment and we seem to be going in the right direction. Like I said we had a great winter and going into the warm-up races I had a lot of confidence and pulled off some good results which boosted my confidence going into the first European race."

**DBR:** Just going back to the Maxxis, Max Anstie has already said that he can't compete in all of them. Is there a chance you could do them all and go for the championship? We've heard the rumours...

**CM:** "I would love to but I definitely can't do them all. After I raced the last two rounds in 2015 I said that I wanted to do them all in 2016 but along with Max and Thomas [Covington] I have to do the Dutch championship and they run pretty much on the same weekend as every Maxxis race. It's a little annoying but there are three more Maxxis races I can do so for sure I'll turn up for them."

**DBR:** The EMX250 class is the most stacked it's ever been with over 120 registered riders so to go 1-1 in Valkenswaard was absolutely phenomenal. How tough is this championship going to be to win?

**CM:** "It's a very strong class and it's down to who wants it more and whoever gets the best starts really. At Valkenswaard I had two great starts and I took advantage of that and won both races. It's going to be tough to win the championship but it's going to be tough for everyone. We all want it as bad as each other so we are going to have to dig deep and whoever comes out on top comes out on top."

**DBR:** Where would you rank Valkenswaard on a list of tracks where you would expect to do well?

**CM:** "The last two years that I raced there on a 125 didn't go well at all so although I was going in with a lot of confidence I just wanted to come away with consistent top five results. But I do love the sand, I've spent most of my career in the sand on the 85s racing in Europe. It's a good track and I do enjoy it but I don't really have a favourite as I enjoy them all. They are all







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# PAINS!



GP tracks and good enough for the MX2 and MXGP boys so for me it's just a pleasure to ride them all."

**DBR:** Tell us a bit about your new team...

**CM:** "Everyone in the new team is so supportive. It really does feel like a 'team' – we all do everything together. There are no secrets, we all help each other out. Max and Thomas give me advice, they are really good to me. If I have a bad day they are all there to pick me back up for the next day. I think that's so important in a team. We have a lot of fun together and enjoy ourselves – I think a happy rider is always going to be a good rider."

**DBR:** With the speed you have at the moment is it slightly frustrating that you're not racing the GP boys?

**CM:** "I'd love to do the GPs. If the team said to me 'would you like to do this GP?' there'd be no question about it, I'd love to do it! But coming into this year the plan was to do the EMX250 championship and that's my main focus. If there is a spare GP they want me to do then I'm willing to do it. My speed is there and I'm happy with where I'm at. In both motos at Lyng I had the fastest lap time and there were some GP riders there."

**DBR:** So whether you win the EMX250 title or not, is the plan for you to do full-time GPs next year?

**CM:** "I think that's the plan, well that's what I want anyway."

**DBR:** Have you watched the careers of other Brit riders that may have gone to GPs too early and made some decisions about your career path based on that?

**CM:** "I don't really like to follow people or emulate what they do but you do look at them and take note. [Ben] Watson, [Adam] Sterry and the others are all top-class GP riders and I can't question what path they've taken as they have all done a great job. I want to take my time and do the Europeans. I don't want to do more than one year [of EMX250] but if it comes down to it and I have to then it's no problem at all. But ideally I want to do GPs next year and go on from there."

**DBR:** Talk us through a week in the life of Conrad Mewse...

**CM:** "I have a very busy week at the moment now I have my new trainer as he has really stepped things up. I am really enjoying it as I love training. I get up in the morning and I want to train, I love it. I do two sessions every day."

"When I'm in England I do it at home but when I'm in Belgium Joel will come with me and monitor things. We have an app that he sets my plan on and I follow it and post my results up online and he sees everything I do. He follows me a lot so there's no cheating or anything. I really enjoy it, we have a laugh together and I think he's a great guy."

**DBR:** How often do you ride?

**CM:** "It depends if I have a race at the weekend but I try and ride four times a week. Two times in the week and two times at a weekend. I don't want to do less than that."

**DBR:** As a 16-year-old how have you adapted to spending a lot of time living away from home?

**CM:** "It's tough sometimes. The first time I got with the KTM guys I was living in Belgium on my own at 14 years old. That was a tough few years for me and it takes a while to get used to it and do things for yourself but now I like being independent. When I see guys I went to school with still getting everything done for them I feel





good about myself. It's nice to be independent and nice to know your body and do things for yourself."

**DBR:** You're doing more training with Justin Morris again...

**CM:** "Yeah, there were things going on at KTM which meant Justin couldn't be at the races. I've been working with him since I was six or seven years old and he has always been a great friend to me. He helps me out around the track and he is just a great guy and I like him there all the time. When he isn't at the races it feels like piece of the puzzle is missing but when he is it feels like all the family is there and I feel really comfortable."

**DBR:** How hard was it to adapt to the 250?

**CM:** "It wasn't difficult at all really. All I had in my mind was that I was just so happy to get off a two-stroke. A lot of people like to stay on the two-strokes and some people go back down on them but I can definitely say I won't ever touch one again!"

**DBR:** Have you set yourself a goal of when you think you could challenge for a world title?

**CM:** "It's going to be tough as MX2 is such a competitive class but a lot of the current riders are going to be moving up to MXGP soon so it's going to be pretty much the same as the first year on the 85 with me racing all of the same people."

"I'll be going into the first year wanting to fight for the championship. There's no doubt everyone going into the GPs wants to fight for the championship or they wouldn't be there. To tell yourself that gives you an extra confidence boost as well. I don't have an expectation of where I want to be as it will be my first year in MX2 and it will be a learning year but I'm going to give it 100 per cent and see where I end up."

**DBR:** What do you think Jeffrey Herlings does differently to be that much better than the other riders in the class?

**CM:** "I talk to myself about it sometimes. A bike can only go so fast and he is on another level to everyone else at the minute. I know he is

putting in so much hard work and you see him fly back from the long-haul GPs to train all week whereas the other riders stay out there relaxing. I think there are a lot of behind-the-scenes things he does with his training that no-one knows about and he is in a world of his own. Another level!"

**DBR:** Growing up who was your idol?

**CM:** "It's got to be Ken Roczen. I remember watching him at GPs and we both were riding with Fox so I met him a few times. Now I see him doing the business over in America it's unbelievable and he is my idol."

**DBR:** Is that something you'd want to emulate, racing GPs and then moving to the USA?

**CM:** "I'd like to be successful in the GPs before I do anything else. I've never even been to America to practice so I don't know what it's like and I don't know if supercross would suit me because I've never tried it so I'll focus on the GPs and see where it goes from there."





Two wins in Valkenswaard was the perfect start to Conrad's EMX250 title tilt



Whippin' it in a team pre-season photoshoot



## JUSTIN TIME

### Morris on Mewse

**DBR:** Can you talk us through the changes you have seen in Conrad over the last couple of years?

**JM:** "Directly after Conrad won the world 85cc championship in 2013 every man and his dog wanted to be a part of his world. He chose to go the factory KTM route with Stefan Everts. Whether that was the right route or the wrong route it was a learning curve all the way though.

"It was a tough transition for Conrad from an 85 to 125 because he was still quite small whereas some of the lads in the class were quite powerful – you've got [Maxime] Renaux and those guys and they are massive lads.

"He was at that point very, very small and we ended up struggling at first with injuries – his confidence was very low. In this game, especially at that level, they are all great riders, they are the best in the world and what can make the difference between a winner and 10th-placed rider can sometimes just come down to confidence both on and off the track – with the bike, with the team, all sorts of different things.

"Also the way that Conrad was taught to ride didn't really lend itself to 125 racing. He is a very smooth, accurate rider and to ride 125s you've got to be looser and a lot more aggressive and he doesn't favour that way of riding. I always knew that when he got on a 250F he'd be the best he'll ever be.

"So he did those two years with KTM and I wasn't vastly involved with what was going on. Myself and Conrad go back nearly a decade but with Stefan being there at the head of it all it was run how Stefan wanted it to be run. I still did bits but nowhere near to the level we were in previous years. So we got to the end of last year and it started to click, finishing second at the worlds behind Renaux and winning a couple of the European rounds in the 125s but it just wasn't him.

"At the end of the year he moved to Rockstar Husqvarna. They work very differently to factory KTM. It's very much like a family and a team effort and that's what he loves. He loves that bond and getting involved and people supporting him even when it's going crap. Everyone loves a winner and it's great to get a pat on the back but when somebody is lower than a snake's gut that's when you need to be there the most I think and that's what you get with Rockstar Husqvarna – they will be there whatever happens.

"Max isn't having a great time at the moment but they will pick him up and they'll work on it. It's what they do and that works fantastically with Conrad."

**DBR:** Although we're only one round into the EMX250 campaign Conrad is already being cited as possible future world champ...

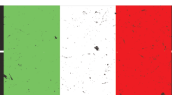
**JM:** "Conrad's now doing what I always thought he would do. I always knew he would be a winner at this level. England has got some great riders including Conrad and I think he's got a bloody good shot at a world title in years to come."

**DBR:** Starts are so important and Conrad had blinders in Valkenswaard and at Lyng. Have you been working on them?

**JM:** "We always work on that, it's so vital. Again it's confidence. The Maxxis was a big thing to get out of the start and run with Max and that worked as he rolled straight into Valkenswaard with that confidence. I don't know why but I just knew he was going to win both races that day.

"The EMX 250 class is so stacked this year I think I'd rather be in MX2 than EMX! It's ruthless! Your mental preparation has to be spot on. There is no building up to it, it's flat-out as soon as you hit the track and that's what Conrad did and what we're working on. Also, going back to the starts I'm not a fan of two feet down. I like one foot up. If you watch Dungey now he is back to one foot up. It's all the little bits that help!"





*Steve Holcombe*

# *Viva* Italia!



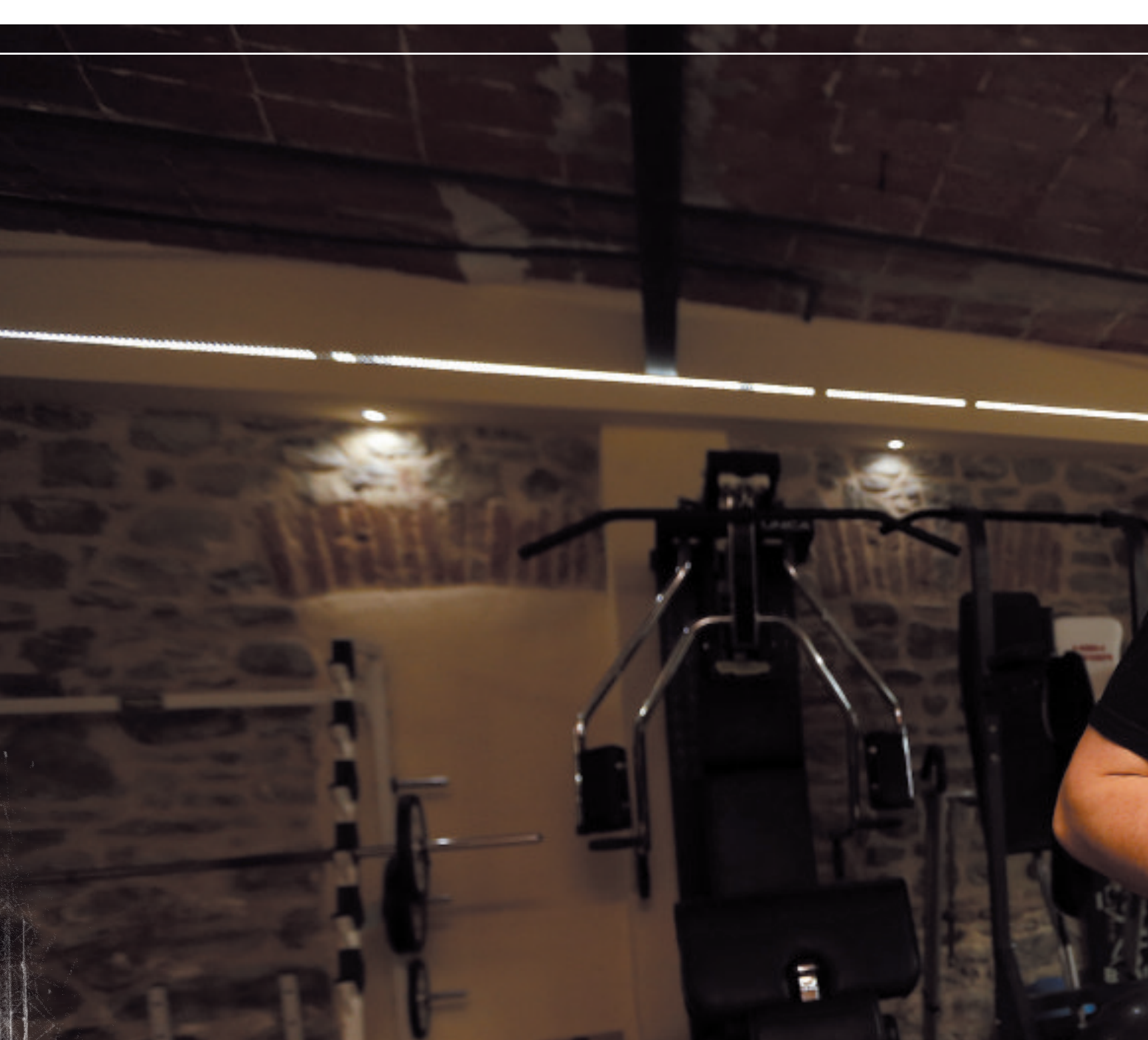
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STICKS AND MOVED TO ITALY - TO LIVE AND TRAIN  
WITH TEAM-MATE AND FORMER ENDURO 2  
WORLD CHAMPION ALEX SALVINI...**

Words and photos by Future7Media









**O**ne day you're a part-time racer, competing in the Enduro World Championship on weekends and managing a Christmas tree plantation back home in Devon during the week. Then, everything changes.

Following a number of standout results in your first full year of EWC competition you get offered, and quickly sign, a factory contract. Life's good – and much less dependent on Christmas trees.

That, in a nutshell, is what happened to Steve Holcombe – the latest Brit to earn himself a place within one of the Enduro World Championship's top teams. Scorching a path to six day wins in the 2015 Enduro Junior World Championship – the exact same number as eventual title winner Jamie McCanney – Steve did enough to impress a number of teams, finally settling to remain with red and the factory Beta squad.

"It's kind of crazy how quickly things can change," answers Steve honestly. "Of course getting a full-time ride is what you dream of, so when you get offered some great opportunities to do what you've always wanted it's a little surreal. Last year might not have brought me a title but I got to show what I'm capable of, and that's lead to where I am now, with the Beta factory team."

Where Steve's at now is a little more than just 'with the Beta factory team'. Following the opening two rounds of the 2016 EWC series he's the Italian team's best performing rider – something that wasn't really supposed to happen, what with being the team's inexperienced youngster n' all.

"There's no way I could have hoped that the first two races in Morocco and Portugal could have gone as well as they did," adds Steve. "I knew where I wanted to be and I surpassed my hopes by a long way. I guess I couldn't have hoped for a better start. But I know that this is

just the start. There's still a lot to learn and a long way to go to the end of the championship"

As good as good starts go, and Steve's has unquestionably been a pretty incredible one, it's not entirely unexpected. He might have claimed three Enduro 3 day wins and moved into the lead of the E3 championship – as well as picking up the overall win of the second day in Portugal – but behind the scenes he's been doing his homework, too.

"I decided to move to Italy not that long after I got back from New Zealand. I headed over there with some friends to switch off a little and spend six weeks cycling around the country. I worked on my fitness without it ever feeling like I was training. It was a great way to recharge my batteries.

"Coming back to cold, wet British weather after being in New Zealand summer was a bit of a shock to the system. I quickly realised that I wasn't going to get much in the way of quality bike time riding in the UK. That's when >>







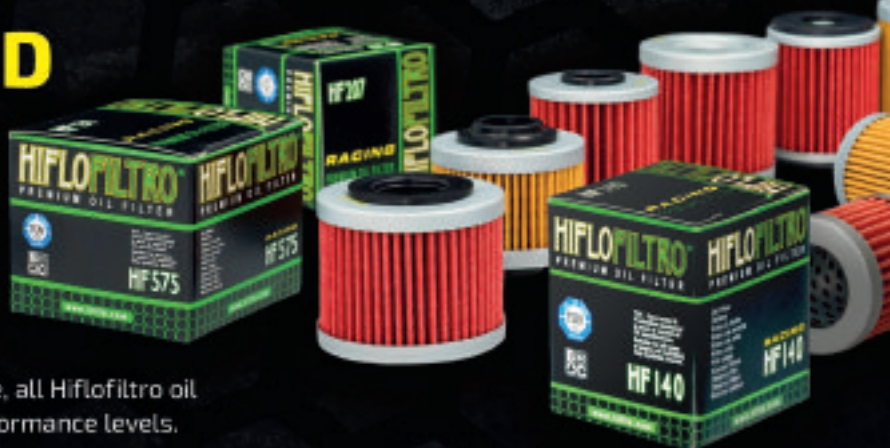
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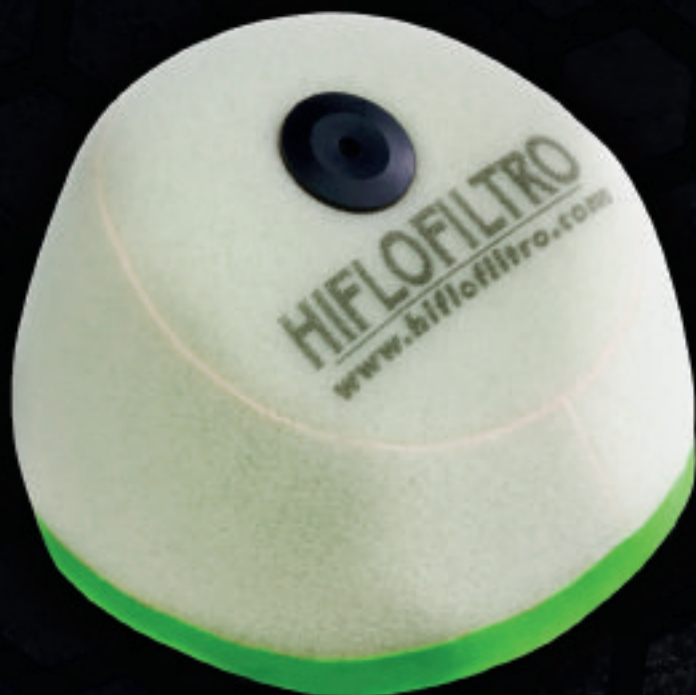


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# HIFLOFILTRO

## RACING

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I started thinking about heading to Italy. I got on well with Alex Salvini and asked him at the first Italian championship event if I could spend some time training with him. That's what I've been doing."

Packing up his camper and heading for Italy, Steve not only brought himself closer to his Beta team but importantly closer to Alex Salvini – one of his two 2016 team-mates and a rider who's been racing 'pro' for over a decade.

"Signing your first contract, everything changes in many ways," explains Steve. "There isn't anything else to really worry about, it's just racing bikes. That takes some getting used to. When you normally have to fit everything in around working, to suddenly have time to just

think about training, riding, resting, etc, that's a huge change.

"Knowing how much to do, when to do what, and how much time to spend riding are all things that need working out. Being with someone like Alex has really helped. I'm really lucky that I've been able to live with him and learn from him. He has everything I need. And knows that training hard and enjoying what you do are equally important.

"As well as some amazing tracks to ride on at his home, he's got a fully equipped gym – just about everything I need. But it's being able to ride and train with someone that's the best thing. It keeps things enjoyable and gives us both someone to push us on."

Back home Steve might be able to find different tracks to ride on but finding riders to go out riding with isn't always that easy. "Living with someone that's doing exactly the same as you are and competing in the same world championship just makes it easier really. We're preparing for the same races, thinking about the same things – the only thing that's different is that we're in different classes.

"I've learned a lot from Alex and I think it's been good for him having someone around to train with."

Whatever Steve's been doing in Italy it's working. Following encouraging results in the opening round of the Italian series, his world championship results have taken just about >>



## SALVINI SPEAKS

### Italian team-mate on training with Steve

"It's been great to get to know Steve. I only met him a few months ago, at the first round of the Italian championship. He asked if he could come to my home and train with me and that's what we've been doing for the last six or eight weeks now.

"It's a pleasure to work with a young rider who's really motivated to do well. It's also very good for me. I think he's surprised everyone with his result. In Morocco he was fast but in Portugal he was riding at another level. He's certainly worked hard but I think even he was surprised.

"We do a lot together – training at motocross tracks, cycling, riding trials bikes, working in the gym. He really knows what he wants to achieve but is also willing to learn. That's one of the really good points about him – he wants to understand what he has to do and how he can do things in a better way.

"It makes things much more fun to have someone easy going like Steve to train with, especially someone so fast."











everyone by surprise. So, are there any secrets he's learned from his time at Salvini's home that have allowed him to jump up the ladder?

"There are no secrets," explains Steve.

"What's been great for me is to learn what life's like when you're a full-time rider. Mixing things up, cycling one day, trials riding the next, that's important. I moved to Italy to learn and to be able to prepare myself for the start of the world championships as best I could, which I feel I did. I'm not getting too carried away with the fact things went really well, but I also know that what I thought were the right things to be doing seem to be the right things to be doing. That's important for me.

"As much as any team or sponsor says there's no pressure, that you should just take your time to learn and settle in, there is pressure. At world championship level there are a lot of great riders, it's just about believing that you can do it and learning what you need to do so that you're able to be at your best."

As well as getting on well with Salvini, Steve's also settled in well with the Beta team. Despite not speaking Italian (not yet) he receives the support needed while flanked by two bigger named riders – two bigger named riders that he's so far largely outperformed.

"Being in a factory team is another thing that is new to me," acknowledges Steve. "Honestly, the team are great. It's not that there are only three of us and we all get one well but also do things in our own way. Being the youngest rider, >>





with no world titles, and not being Italian, you might expect all the attention to go to Johnny (Aubert) and Alex but it's not been like that. I guess my good results help but we all get treated fairly even though I'm the junior. It's really cool being in a team that's as pleased and as happy as I am with my results."

With the Enduro World Championship series now started, and now knowing that he's a genuine Enduro 3 title challenger, Steve's unquestionably well placed for a great debut season of senior class EWC competition. But while the first, and arguably biggest, of this year's hurdles has been jumped, one thing Steve's well aware of is that there's a lot of racing and a lot of learning still to be done.

"The one thing that won't change throughout this year is that I'll keep on learning. That's the biggest thing for me this year. Every new race is a new learning experience and like they say every day's a school day. But the fact that I know I can win does change things a little.

"If nothing else the first two rounds of the championship were a really big confidence booster for me. Having some good results in the junior class is one thing but being able to do well in the senior classes is another thing. Also,

with this year's championship starting from the overall championship results it's been important to make a good start. Now I'm starting close to the front of each event, with the fastest riders. That's important, especially when conditions are bad like in Portugal. Now I have to keep myself at the front of the results and do my best to try and win the Enduro 3 title."

So what's the plan now? With things having worked out well at Salvini's home is the plan to remain there and try and re-work the magic?

"Yes and no," offers Steve. "Short term, I'm going to be back at Alex's place but I'm also planning to head to Finland. I want to spend some time there ahead of the first of two races in Scandinavia. They're always hugely important events so I want to get myself as ready as I can for those. After that I'll probably spend some more time back in the UK.

"I guess I don't want to outstay my welcome," he jokes. "But I am intending to go back to Italy. Nothing's definite yet but I might rent my own place there at the beginning of next year. I really like it there and there are some great places to ride. That's a long way off yet but things have gone really well this year so it makes sense to do the same again..."





## FROM THE TOP

### Beta Enduro Factory team manager Fabrizio Dini speaks . . .

**DBR:** When did Beta first become aware of Steve?

**FD:** "Last year we knew about Steve but our team was full. We heard about him from the guys in the UK. The Beta Boano team was without a rider so that was where Steve raced. I think it was a great opportunity for Steve. He really impressed everyone at Beta last year."

**DBR:** So a place in the Beta factory team was a logical progression?

**FD:** "Yes. We wanted to take him into the factory team. We could see from last year that he's a good guy to work with, very serious about his racing but also young. We need talented young riders but they're not so easy to find."

**DBR:** What were your first impressions working with Steve?

**FD:** "It was a little strange for me but in a good way. We did a small test and he said everything was fine with the bike. The bike that we prepared for him was the bike that he wanted to race. After two months we made another test where Steve only made a few small changes. He explained that he needed to learn and

understand the bike and not make big changes to it."

**DBR:** What are Beta's plans for Steve this year?

**FD:** "Normally, this year was to allow him to gain some experience and get used to the speed of the senior class riders. We didn't expect too much, honestly. Maybe during the second half of the season he would be able to challenge for the podium."

**DBR:** It looks like you might have to rethink those plans!

**FD:** "Yes and no. It's amazing what he's achieved so far, winning the overall on day two in Portugal and showing that he can fight for the Enduro 3 championship. But that doesn't mean he doesn't need to learn, he does. He is fast but still inexperienced, so we won't now start putting pressure on him to do this or that."

**DBR:** Does Beta have any specific goals or objectives for Steve for the remainder of 2016?

**FD:** "We are all very happy with Steve. He's fitted into the team really well and we just hope that things continue to go well for him. Okay, his results have been very, very good. But the most important thing for me is how well he has settled into the team and the way he has done that. He wants to learn, to improve. And we will do everything we can to help him..."











# T U N N E L VISION!

**EVEN WHEN HE WAS TURNING LAPS ON A SMALL-WHEEL 85CC PAUL COATES KNEW HE WAS GOING TO BE A PRO RACER AND NOW, AT THE AGE OF 21, THE FLORIDA-BASED BRIT IS ON THE VERGE OF HITTING THE BIG TIME IN THE USA**

Words by **Sean Lawless** Photos by **Frank Hoppen**

**M**ost young riders dream of turning pro, Paul Coates knew he would. The US-based Brit, who's currently chasing down a top-10 position in the Monster Energy Supercross 250cc East division, reckons he was sure it was the career path he was going to take from an early age.

"I didn't even think about not doing it for a job," he says. "I didn't think about working somewhere else or doing a normal job. It was the only thing I knew, the only thing I thought about. It was like a tunnel."

"I didn't just all of a sudden spring to being good and then decide to do it as an after-thought. I didn't just realise I was good and then want to do it – I wanted to do it for a living before I was good. Since I was 10 I wanted to do it for a job. That was the plan."

As plans go it was a good one and a combination of talent, speed and dogged determination has seen the 21-year-old rise through the amateur ranks and begin to forge a career on both sides of the Atlantic.

Now in his third season as a pro, at the time of writing he's sitting 12th in the SX standings and is just six points shy of a place in the top 10. After problems at the opening two rounds he's shown he's capable of running with the factory teams and has earned a reputation as a rider who's prepared to hang it out to make passes.

"At Atlanta at the first round I got into another rider in a corner >>>





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After a few years mounted on Yamahas Paul is riding red in 2016



PC moved up to a 450 for the 2014 AMA Nationals

and it broke the brake line and in the second round at Daytona we had a problem that completely took us out of the race. But I knew if I kept on pushing it would come and then the next week in Toronto I had a ninth-placed finish which I was really happy with.

"Then I went to Detroit and I sorta brought the confidence from the ninth place and I got an eighth. That was really the best one for me because I was feeling really good in practice and then had a crash right at the end of the second practice session and hurt my foot.

"I went to the Asterisk medical rig and they taped it up. It was a lot of pain but I didn't want to let everybody down so I went out in my heat race and it wasn't too bad. In the Main Event I

ran fourth for six or seven laps and I was really feeling good just to run up there with the factory guys. I slipped back just a little at the end of the race – the track was getting very beat up – but I was really happy to get a career best."

With a three-week break before the next round at Indianapolis, Paul was able to rest up and let his foot heal but he was forced to dig deep in the Lucas Oil Stadium.

"It was really a tough track and I didn't have a good day. I didn't get the qualifying position I wanted and I was a little bit further on the outside of the gate. I knew I had to push to get a good result but I didn't get the start – I was in 22nd which is last – and I realised that I had to pick guys off. It was one of them where you

don't worry too much about what's going on, you just keep your head down and keep on pushing.

"I managed to get past 11 people and I almost got into 10th at the end of the race which would have been great from where I started. I actually got a little bit of recognition – I was the guy who passed the most people by a mile – so it worked out for the best and it opened some eyes.

"I showed that I can do it weekend after weekend. For the rest of the season the goal is to make it into the top 10 in points and if I can keep putting it in the top 10 in the Main Events I think I can climb up there."

Paul, who's originally from Bishop Auckland, >>>





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has been full-time in the USA for the last five years but his strong Durham accent betrays his roots in the North East of England.

Now based in Florida, he's racking up the air miles as he chases Stateside success.

"During the season, weekend to weekend, we don't ride every day because it just wears you out with the travelling and everything. I live in the country between Tampa and Orlando. I fly every Friday to the race and then fly home Sunday morning. Fly in and out, it's the only way to do it. If I was trying to drive to every race I'd never get on the bike in the week.

"St Louis is about a 15-hour drive – that's one of the not too bad ones – but only takes about two hours to fly. Toronto would be about 30 hours to drive to – it's doable but you'd always be on the road and that's no good, you just can't go a full season like that. Everyone flies, all the top guys."

Following a fairly orthodox start, Paul's racing career took a very different route after a holiday to the USA exposed him to a new lifestyle.

"I was around four when I started riding but I didn't start racing until I was six. My dad didn't race but he had a friend who did it – David Salkeld – so when I was young he had me a bike ready to go.

"I was pretty good [as a schoolboy]. I was winning some local stuff on a 50cc and on a 65 I won quite a bit – Future West supercross rounds, rounds of the British championship but I never won the championship. My first year in the small wheel class I won the first round of the British championship and then I was racing the first round of one of the other championships and I broke my femur so that just killed it for a long time.

"After that I took a long, long break – I was off for a year – and then I started coming to America and stopped racing in England. I came over here with Scott Elderfield in 2004 when I would have been 10. I went for two weeks just to see what it was like but I didn't start moving here until '09."

The tried and tested route for UK riders wanting to race Stateside usually involves a stay at the Millsaps Training Facility and Paul started spending more and more time in Georgia until he made a permanent move in 2011.

"I love England but I came here and the motocross just doesn't have as much of a ceiling on it. There's no limit to what you can do if you get good enough so you can just keep climbing the ladder until you're a superstar pretty much and there's not that option in England. You're sort of capped to a certain level.

"There are some great riders in England especially now with Shaun Simpson and Tommy Searle racing but you have to go to the world championship to get that level. I was debating to myself would I go that route or would I try to come here and I decided to come to America and do it that way just because there's no limit to what you can do. You can keep on moving up and there's a lot of money involved. It's more of a 'thing' all around."

After the inevitable process of settling into his new way of life Paul found his feet and enjoyed success in the US youth classes.

"I struggled a bit at first. Not so much with the riding but with how different it was. The really short races, a lot of races back-to-back. I had to figure what it was all about but then after that I did pretty well. In 2011 I won at Loretta's which is like the biggest thing ever here – the Holy Grail – and the Mini Os is the second biggest and I won a lot there.

"That was in the schoolboy classes. Then you move up to the next level which is B class and I was sorta battling with Cooper Webb and I actually beat him a couple of times so I was right up there at the top of my game as an amateur.

"I was battling with guys like Matt Bisceglia who would have been on Geico at the time and I was on factory Yamaha so I was up there at the top.

I didn't struggle too much as an amateur, I enjoyed >>







TUN  
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After spending years racing jump filled American circuits Coates is really comfortable racing indoors



it a lot."

Paul was initially supported financially by his family and it's clearly a source of pride to him that his results began to allow him to pay his own way.

"When I first came it was all my dad for the first few years until probably 2012. I turned 18 in 2012 but probably when I was 17 I started to take over financially. I'd have liked to have been paying for myself at 12 like some of the people out here but it worked pretty good.

"My dad's really enthusiastic. He loves the fact I've moved away from a small town and I'm doing something to get known."

The level of success Paul's enjoying has been hard-won after injuries disrupted his first two years as a pro. His debut season in 2014 was tough mentally and physically for Paul and his indoor campaign came to a premature end at Daytona a week after he scored his first point at Indianapolis.

"I was supported by Yamaha which meant they just gave me the bikes. I was a privateer but I got free bikes and a little bit of money from sponsors. I raced the East Coast supercross series – I did the first three rounds but it didn't go to plan. It was very frustrating

that feeling when guys I'd beaten three months before were beating me and it was a really bumpy road at that point.

"I got hurt at the fourth round and that put the brakes on it but it was almost like it was a blessing in disguise because I regrouped and rebuilt myself. I'd learnt then what it was all about so I sorta went back to the basics, figured out how to race these pro races and got back on schedule."

Outdoors he switched up to the 450 class with his best moto finish of 15th prompting a dramatic switch that took him back to Europe for the 2015 MXGP series.

"I raced a 450 just because I was on my own at the time and outdoors – two 35-minute motos – a 250 that's competitive is very expensive and very hard to keep going. I got some bikes from Yamaha but they weren't paying for the engines to be built and you can race a standard 450 and compete with most people. You can't race a standard 250 – you've got to have a really good programme to be competing in the 250 class.

"It worked out well, I gained a lot more experience and it also led to a 450 ride in the GPs with the Italian JK Racing team. I think >>

## PAUL ON... INJURIES

"This is my third season as a pro but I didn't race last year other than the first two grands prix which was frustrating because you take that first year and – whatever the outcome – you take it on the chin because it's your first year and you're sorta learning the ropes.

"The second year is when you start to kick in and tearing my ACL killed my second year. Injuries are really frustrating. I know everybody has them but to get one two years back-to-back takes a big chunk out of the racing year."

## PAUL ON... THE GREAT INDOORS

"I've been racing a lot in Italian and German supercross because I really enjoy them. It's not as much pressure over there, it's much more laidback and there's good opportunities to meet new people and financially do well.

"So every year in the off-season instead of resting I go and race mostly in Germany although I've done some races in Denmark and Italy.

"This winter I raced a full season of the ADAC in the 250 class and had a really good series with the Monster Energy Kawasaki team. We missed out on the championship by half-a-point. You wouldn't believe it but with the scoring system that they have there are half-points in there.

"With a lap to go in the final race I was winning the championship and just because someone in third fell the guy I was battling with for the championship got past him – I ended up losing it with 20 seconds to go.

"Luckily I was able to win a few individual rounds. In Germany they treat it a little bit different. They have the championship points and then they have the King and Prince of every round and you get a lot more from winning each round than winning the championship. It was a great time."









## PAUL ON... COMING HOME

"It would probably depend on what I have on the table over here but certainly in the British championship there are no slouches and it'd be interesting to come back as a pro – if the deal was right I'm sure I'd do it. I'm open to anything."

"I'm always looking to broaden my horizons and get as much experience and do all sorts of different stuff. I've been able to gather experience from all over the world and now, in my third year as a pro, I think I'm putting it all into action."

"I'm putting everything I've learned in the past together and starting to make some huge improvements."

I could have been more competitive in the 250 class [in GPs] but, again, I raced the 450 because it was my only option. They were really good to me but they wanted a 450 rider only so that's what I did. I figured I'd go where the ride was."

At the end of the outdoor season, with his focus at this point still on racing AMA supercross, Paul headed to Europe to contest the string of lucrative winter indoor races.

"I went over to Germany and raced the 250 there and did really well. In the ADAC series I was able to win a lot of races and just had a lot of fun and refilled the bank account a little bit. It was actually to prepare for the 2015 supercross series."

Anytime you can race it's good practice to be on the gate – the more racing you do the more comfortable you get with it – so instead of taking a long off-season of three or four months I just went and raced overseas.

"I was planning on coming back to America for the supercross and then I got the offer to race the world championship so I went ahead and took the deal. There wasn't a bike or a team I could have went with for the supercross so it was sort of like I could struggle again and put a programme together with individual sponsors or I could go where there was a seat, where I could just fly in and the bike would be ready to go."

Despite scoring points in both races at the second round of the 2015 MXGP series in

Thailand, a knee injury sustained there brought his second year as a pro to another early end.

"I got back to America and went and got an MRI scan to see what was up and the ACL was completely torn. I was out the full season with the knee – I actually could have come back but I thought about the risk to reward for racing the last grand prix and decided I was better to prepare for the next year."

Once he had fully healed Paul headed back to Europe at the end of last year for another round of winter indoor races and a run of good results brought him to the attention of his current Ti-Lube Storm Lake Honda team.

"The team knew me from back in my amateur days and they wondered where I'd been and what my recent results had been. They looked into what I'd done in Europe and we were able to make a deal right before supercross started."

After being forced to race 450s outdoors purely for economic reasons, Paul's form indoors this year has finally earned him a 250 ride in the Lucas Oil Pro Motocross Championship.

"I'm working on a deal right now to race outdoors. I'll be ready to go as soon as the supercross season finishes and we'll go 12 full rounds. It'll make for a long year but I'm really excited, I'm ready to race."

With the luxury of having the rest of his season planned out, Paul's not worrying too much about what the future holds in store for him.

"It's a pretty short career in motocross. I'd like to just keep on climbing the ladder and be able to be a factory rider and race until I'm at least 30. Just keep on doing what I'm doing, get on a factory team and progress from there. As long as I can still make a living from racing motorcycles I'll be still doing it."

"I'm fortunate enough to make a living from it right now and I'm sorta just living weekend to weekend, enjoying the ride. I don't want to think too far ahead – I'm just focussing on what's happening now."



# THE FWORD!

Stacey Fisher is fast and female but for the quickest woman in England motocross is all about having fun...

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Nuno Laranjeira

**S**tacey Fisher is a bloody good racer – for a woman. There, I've said it. Like it or not, motocross is widely perceived as a man's sport and women's racing is viewed by some as a sideshow attraction, something a little bit different.

Without naming and shaming I know at least one MX writer who regularly refers to female competitors as 'girls' – no matter what their age or their speed or how hard they work – which is nothing short of disrespectful.

So let's start again...

Stacey Fisher is a bloody good racer. Take Natalie Kane out of the equation and the 23-year-old from Leigh, near Manchester, is the UK's fastest female and more than capable of mixing it with the men – something she's been proving this year at the Acerbis Amateur Nationals.

We sat down for this interview at the second round of the series at Culham. The Ladies class was mixed in with the 250cc Two-stroke Open class with a 'split gate' sending the 250s away first before the gate was reset for the woman.

>>






Stacey dials in her starts ahead of the Dutch GP at Vakenswaard



Stacey's scored points in three out of four GP motos held so far this year







**//** Some of the boys didn't take being beaten by a girl too well — I've had some come and try and have fights with me but some would come over and congratulate me like I was another boy. **//**

This gave the men at least a 30-second advantage but by the flag Stacey was in the thick of the action in every race with her best finish a 12th. And she was riding a 125.

Having grown up racing against male opposition, Stacey appears genuinely unconcerned about lining up next to men.

"I don't know how the men take me beating them and I'm quite pleased to be honest," she says. "I didn't think I'd catch any of them but, obviously, some of them have made mistakes and fallen. I come up to some of them and I don't know whether they hear the two-stroke sound and think it's another guy in their 250 race or if they know it's a girl coming up to them but they can be like 'no, I'm not having this' — I had one in the last race who didn't want to let me past.

"I quite like it with the 250s — you can have a race with some of them and it doesn't get silly. I wouldn't say they're lenient with me but they don't just go hell-for-leather and we get longer races with them as well — 15 minutes rather than 12 if we were with the Vets [as they were last season].

"With doing the worlds which are 20 minutes plus two I need to at least be at the higher range at these meetings."

By the 'worlds' Stacey means the full-blown FIM Women's Motocross World Championship. Having dipped her toe in the WMX waters over the past few years, for 2016 she's racing the full season and after rounds at Losail and Valkenswaard her performances have been solid.

Last year she contested just the European rounds of the series with limited success, scoring six points from four GPs. This time around she's currently sitting 15th in the championship table with her best result a second race 10th in Qatar but Stacey's been forced to adjust her style to compete against the world's best female riders after dominating at home last season.

"The standard's very high. The top five women are pretty amazing at the minute. It reminds me of being back in the youth classes. They're all very, very aggressive and I forget that they're women sometimes.

"I get off the start and for the first few laps I'm like 'whoa, calm down, we've got 20 minutes plus two laps' but then I realise if I don't do what they're doing I get left behind. I have to change my riding style when I go to a world championship race — I have to be more aggressive and be on it from when the gate drops."

Her 2015 campaign came about after a sponsor stepped up and offered solid support.

"One of my sponsors — Wayne Feehily — approached me and said he wanted to go so why didn't I come with him in his truck and split the costs. Wayne helped out a lot last year with taking us there and providing everything for us. I really enjoyed it last year. I was a bit disappointed with not getting more points but it was an experience.

"I hadn't done many rounds before — only one or two. I did my first one at Matterley and then the year after that I'm sure it was Matterley again and I went to Valkenswaard but I had a really bad crash there. Then I left it for a year."

For 2016 it's again a case of enthusiastic backers enabling Stacey to contest GPs.

"Basically, it's all to do with the sponsors I've got this year, especially Simon Whitby Construction. He approached me and said that this time if I was going to do them he wanted me to do them all. I really appreciate his help. He got me to Qatar — both of us went and we had a really good time. It was an experience and I did better than I thought I would.

"I really enjoy the [GP] tracks. I enjoy riding sand. I might not be as fast in it as on >>





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hardpack but I enjoy riding it so the last round at Valkenswaard was good for me and I was really proud of the results I got. I was pleased to qualify to be honest.

"The tracks are a lot different to what we ride over here and I have to say some of the jumps you look at and think 'no way'. At Qatar at the start of the year I was looking at some of the take-offs and they were like walls. The standard is completely different."

Whether male or female, there's a common path most riders take in motocross and Stacey's journey through the ranks has followed this.

"My dad raced and, unfortunately, my brother was born disabled so he had no other choice but to stick me on a bike. When I started racing I was seven but I started on a quad when I was three.

"I just raced general club rounds although I did do the odd Girls' National. I don't have much memory of the Autos or my 65cc years but the 85cc years were the best for me. Small wheels I wasn't too bad but big wheels at club level I did go one year where I only got beaten in one race, not one meeting, one race. And that was because I fell off.

"Some of the boys didn't take being beaten by a girl too well – I've had some come and try and have fights with me but some would come over and congratulate me like I was another boy."

The physical difference between the sexes is the biggest reason why men are, in general, faster but Stacey feels her gender gave her an early advantage.

"After I moved out of the big wheels I noticed that girls were ahead of the boys in those sort of classes and in the smaller classes but obviously, at the point I'm at now, the men have taken over. I do think girls develop a lot quicker and I was towering over boys when I was a teenager but now I'm a little short arse to them.

"When I came out of the big wheels I got a 125cc Suzuki and I didn't get on well with it at all. I probably only rode it a handful of times. A friend of mine was selling an '05 250 Honda four-stroke and I got on that and took to it like a duck to water. I absolutely loved it.

"I stayed with them for the next three years – I got an '08 Honda and then a '10 Honda but they'd changed the geometry and it didn't work out for me. I felt like the faster I got the more dangerous I got. I needed to become stronger. I see it even at world level – I don't think women are going to ever be capable of handling a 250 [four-stroke] to its full potential."

Having raced GPs, Stacey's ideally placed to comment and she's sufficiently grounded to recognise why she races and where her priorities lie.

"The top women in the world are really quick on them but they could go quicker and that's maybe when you start seeing mistakes. >>



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Although possibly faster on a 250F  
Stacey prefers the fun factor racing  
a 125cc two-stroke offers

## Stacey on . . .

### Acerbis Amateur Nationals

"I only know of the Acerbis Nationals that does the women's races. I used to do the ACU ones when they were about but they don't do them anymore. Darren puts on a really good show for the women.

"This weekend we've been trying the split start and I think it has its good points and bad points. I genuinely don't mind either way. The good thing for me is that I know what position I'm in without having to look at a board. We all set off together, we're all women and I know who's in front and who I have to pass.

"It's a shame that we don't have our own race but that's down to numbers and I feel now that this split start's happening it makes the girls more confident because, obviously, the start's the most terrifying thing.

"Not being with men who are very aggressive might make more girls come and try it out."

I started shutting off in a lot of places and became slower and quite scared. So I took a big leap back to a 125 and was worse on it – I was a lot slower – but I just said to my dad 'I'm having a lot of fun but I don't care if I'm at the back of the pack, I'm having fun'.

"It's took me up until now to start riding it how I should and I feel I could be better. My dad still thinks I'm better on a four-stroke but I always say to him when he tries to get me to try one again that I'm having fun – it's not a job for me, I work five days a week and I want to have fun on my days off and that's what I do on my 125."

Enjoyment is so obviously key to Stacey's racing and she appears to rank it above results which, in such a competitive sport, is pretty unconventional. Off the top of her head she

can't recall exactly what titles she's won – "a few Girls Nationals titles, a few Acerbis titles and a maybe few at club level" is the best she can do – but Stacey is a pretty unconventional woman and the motocross track isn't the only male-dominated environment she excels in.

"I'm a maintenance engineer. I work for Stanley Black & Decker in Warrington. I maintain machines that make fastening devices. We do work for aerospace, Rolls Royce, Renault and any other company that needs our product. I get my trolley full of tools, wheel it out onto the shop floor and try and diagnose what the fault is and fix it if I can.

"There's just two of us in the whole factory but the other lady is a machine op. She's the only woman who runs a machine and I'm the only woman who maintains them."

Stacey puts her readiness to mix with the opposite sex – both on the track and in the workplace – as a result of her upbringing.

"I grew up around boys. We liked being on pushbikes when we were younger and used to make jumps and I used to play football. I was a right little Tomboy but I never saw it like I should act like a girl.

"I was just myself and did what I enjoyed and if it was playing football it was football and if it was riding bikes and going over dirt jumps then that's what it was and that's what I did. I think that's where it's all come from, having a brother and being surrounded by boys and men all the time."

With opportunities to race against a female field few and far between in the UK, Stacey doesn't get a huge amount of saddle time but >>



**“ I grew up around boys. We liked being on pushbikes when we were younger and used to make jumps and I used to play football. I was a right little Tomboy. ”**



that hasn't prevented her dominating the Ladies class of the Acerbis Nationals – even if she's racing a 125 against 250cc four-strokes.

“To be honest I only really do the worlds and the Acerbis Nationals. I try to get out on the bike when the weather's nice but it's mostly practising. I did one race at the start of the year with 90MX so I could practice at FatCat but it was in preparation for the first round of the Acerbis.”

In 2015 Stacey was the class act of the Acerbis Amateur Nationals Ladies field, winning 26 of the 29 races she contested. However, a decision to race the French GP instead of the fourth round at Dean Moor – coupled with a big crash at Farleigh Castle – prevented her from winning the title.

“I missed a double-dayer and lost a potential 200 points but I really think the point where I lost it was the crash I had at Farleigh. I was dazed and badly winded. I did get up even though everything was swaying about but when





I went to pick the bike up I realised the bolts onto the yokes had snapped and that was it for me. I just fell back on the floor and let the pain sink in. That's what lost it for me – if I'd won that race I'd have won the championship."

Instead the title went to Welsh racer Tanisha Thomas who'd battled a back injury for the last two rounds, only to discover once she'd wrapped up the championship that the pain was caused by a tumour on her spine.

It's typical of the camaraderie of the Acerbis series that when Tanisha was unable to attend the presentation, championship promoter Darren Hudson and his team travelled hundreds of miles to hand over her trophy. Stacey fully realises the significance of this selfless act and is happy to have played, albeit indirectly, a part in it.

"I'm actually pleased I didn't win. If I had then Darren might not have set the podium for Tanisha in the hospital and that gave her a big pick-me-up. I look at it and think she needed

it way more than I did and she deserved it way more than I did. She stayed on and was consistent and unfortunately I wasn't."

This unselfish attitude extends onto the track where the friendship that exists among the female racers goes a long way towards keeping the racing clean and sporting.

"There's rivalry of course – if you're in a rut on the inside of someone and your lines are going to meet then you want to beat them to the end of it – but I do see them all as friends. I wouldn't be so sly out on track to take any of my friends out which is all of them basically.

"Motocross is a lifestyle and I really enjoy it. I do a lot of sports – snowboarding with my boyfriend Lee and we recently got into downhill mountain biking and I really enjoy that. I do it for the fun and I think sometimes people forget that it should be fun. On a track like this today when you get a rut spot on, nice and smooth and you come in and out quick you can't get a better feeling than that. I love it."

## Stacey on . . .

### Role models

"When I very first found out about her I'd say my role model was Laurie Squirrell. She must have been pretty awesome to be able to even consider riding with the men.

"To be honest I didn't really hear about Stefan Everts until a couple of years before his retirement. I never even knew motocross was on TV. I rode at the weekend and that was my life but now I'm well into watching it on TV.

"I like Clement Desalle, I like his riding style. He's very smooth, very relaxed and that's how I'd like to ride."





Heinz Kinigadner (KTM) wins the 1984 French 250GP at St Jean d'Angeley



Graham Noyce (Honda) vaults past the Monument Café at Namur in 1982

BURNICLE'S BEAT

# TOWNLEY'S

**BEN TOWNLEY LET RIP RECENTLY ABOUT THE STATE OF MXGP CIRCUITS AND IS IT ANY WONDER WHEN HE RACED THESE GOLDEN OLDIES EARLIER IN HIS CAREER?**

Words and photos By Jack Burnicle

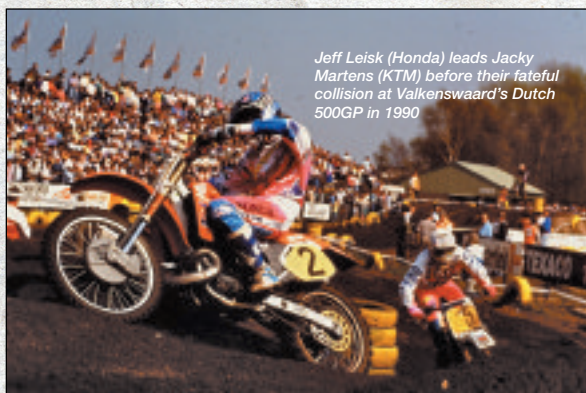


Smooth sandmeister and Herlings lookalike Andre Vromans (Yamaha) trounces Andre Malherbe and Hakan Carlqvist en route to his maiden 500GP victory at Valkenswaard in 1980





A week shy of his 21st birthday Geoff Mayes (CZ) nails sixth place ahead of Rolf Dieffenbach (Maico) in the 1976 Dutch 250GP at Lichtenvoorde



Jeff Leisk (Honda) leads Jacky Martens (KTM) before their fateful collision at Valkenswaard's Dutch 500GP in 1990



Georges Jobe (Suzuki) sails to victory in the 1981 Italian 250GP at Gallarate

# TOUR!



Heinz Kinigadner (KTM) crests a hilltop ahead of runner-up Gert-Jan van Doorn (Suzuki) en route to winning the second moto of the 1984 French 250GP at St Jean d'Angeley

**B**en Townley, the 2004 world MX2 champion, emerged from retirement this year to ride for his former rival Stefan Everts at Suzuki. Let's remind ourselves of the Kiwi's glittering career. Ben joined a German Suzuki team in 2001, travelling alone from New Zealand to Europe at the tender age of 16 to contest 125GPs. He finished top 10 at Genk in Belgium and moved to Vangani in 2002 alongside fellow teenaged starlets Tyla Ratray and Tanel Leok. They became known as the 'Dream Team', Townley scorching to second overall in the opening round in

Valkenswaard, winning his first grand prix at Uddevalla and ending the year sixth overall. For 2003 he moved on to Champ KTM under the management of Dutch legend Kees van der Ven and the following year debuted a prototype 250F Katoom in the inaugural MX2 series.

'BT' trounced the opposition, winning nine out of a possible 16 grands prix and almost every moto when his four-stroke development motor didn't let him down. He also claimed the Dutch MX2 national title before moving on to KTM's factory 450.

Ben won four GPs in his rookie season –

including the second round in Spain – and challenged big bike guvnors Stefan Everts and Josh Coppins the whole way, finishing third overall. That fall he represented New Zealand in the MX des Nations at Ernee where he beat Everts, Mickael Pichon and Kevin Windham and finished runner-up to Ricky Carmichael before heading across the Atlantic and settling near Carmichael's home at Tallahassee in Florida. There, hired by Mitch Payton's Pro-Circuit Kawasaki squad Ben, like so many bright-eyed hopefuls before him, promptly wrecked himself. A severe knee injury meant he missed >>



The sun shines on Roger De Coster (Honda) during Valkenswaard's first Dutch 500GP in 1980





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the supercross season but came back to claim his first AMA motocross rostrum at Glen Helen. He ripped into 2007 with three main event wins to clinch the SX Lites East Coast supercross crown, beating fellow rookie Ryan Dungey! He and Pro-Circuit team-mate Ryan Villopoto then took the outdoor nationals to a last moto decider, Villopoto snatching the verdict by just three points.

I hope you're getting some idea of just how good Townley was! He then signed for Honda America's official Red Bull squad but badly broke his foot in pre-season training. This misfortune triggered a series of injuries that wiped out two years, though he did return in 2010 to claim fourth overall in the AMA outdoors with rostrum finishes at the Red Bull National in Michigan and Lakewood, Colorado, where he also won the first moto of the MX des Nations before announcing his return to Europe and the world championships with Team CLS Kawasaki. But further injury curtailed his season after four rounds, though he did pop back to the States and finish second in the first race of the season-ending Monster Energy Las Vegas supercross!

Returning home to regroup and rebuild, Ben signed with Honda to contest the Australian SX and MX series in 2012 before announcing his retirement from racing to work for HRC mentoring their factory riders in the All-Japan championship. The temptation to compete proved too great though and his sensational second place to Romain Febvre in the MX des back at Ernee last September – on one of Dave Thorpe's Buildbase Hondas – opened up possibilities of a European comeback.

Ben had been away from world championship competition for a decade and after winning the Saturday qualifier in Thailand he was asked at the press conference if his return had been a culture shock. Ben's response was unequivocal!

"Coming to these tracks, they are just not good enough. You're going to hear honest and openly from me. Qatar and here isn't the pinnacle of our sport. We are the MXGP, the best riders in the world, and these guys can't sit here and honestly say it is an amazing place to ride a motorcycle. We are in a flat paddock in the middle of nowhere.

"That is where the culture shock is for me; to be here and in conditions like this. This, in my opinion, is not good enough for the sport. I'm glad I got the opportunity to say that here today. We get told to not put the sport into disrepute but this is the best championship in the world. I think that it deserves better."

This considered criticism instantly antagonised Youthstream boss Giuseppe Luongo, who waded in with a rather less measured response. "I am very disappointed," quoth the Italian entrepreneur. "It is not the way for a professional rider to talk in a press conference like this. I never say something when a rider finishes 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th place because it is not fast. I cannot say it is sh\*t, it is not good and so on.

"Also to say that Qatar was sh\*t and this was sh\*t, when a rider is not fast I do not say they are sh\*t. I have to respect their work and they have to respect the work of the organisers if they want to be professional. I am very, very disappointed and I have already spoken to Suzuki about it. If Ben Townley wants a change of work, I will employ him to come and make the track for us."

Hardly a 'professional' riposte, particularly as Townley's refreshing outburst voiced the feelings of a high percentage of avid MX fans. To appreciate his dismay you must first realise what spectacular, real motocross tracks featured on our grand prix calendar when Townley last raced so successfully in the world championships.

After kicking off 2004 at Bellpuig, in Spain, he scored back-to-back victories at Agueda, in Portugal and the mighty stamina-sapping Dutch sands of Valkenswaard. The Portuguese track first featured on the world scene in 1985 when Dave Strijbos (125 Honda) took victory. Valkenswaard, still a gut-wrenching challenge to the present crop of grand prix riders, dates back even further, to Sylvain Geboers' 250 Suzuki success in 1974 and has been a constant presence since 1992, when Suzuki won again in the hands of Sylvain's successor as Suzuki boss, Stefan Everts!

The fourth round of that 2004 MX2 series visited another Dutch sand track and featured another Townley triumph. Lichtenvoorde actually hosted the original, first-ever world championship Dutch 500cc grand prix in 1957 and its first 250GP, in 1976, was also the first I attended abroad, travelling in their Ford Transit van with Geartec Yamaha boss Rob Hooper and his late dad Bob!

Ben Townley and his prototype 2004 KTM then won again at the Isle of Wight's British round before heading back across the channel to St Jean d'Anglesey. This superb circuit opened its grand prix account in 1984, the day Jacky Vimond became the first Frenchman to win a grand prix moto. It subsequently ran 500GPs in 1989 and 1995, won respectively by >>



Aussie Jeff Leisk (Honda) wins a moto at his first 500GP, Valkenswaard, 1989



Vladimir Kavinov (KTM 47) and Jim Pomeroy (Bultaco 31) storm to the front of Lichtenvoorde's first ever Dutch 250GP in 1976



Idyllic setting for Italian idol Alex Puzar (Yamaha) in his home 1993 250GP at Castiglione del Lago



1986 Belgian 500GP at Namur: Geboers (3), Mike Larson (53), Nicoll (5), Persson (10), Willie Simpson (15), Thorpe (1), Jobe (4), Malherbe (2), Carlqvist (11), Anstie (15) and Andrews (14)



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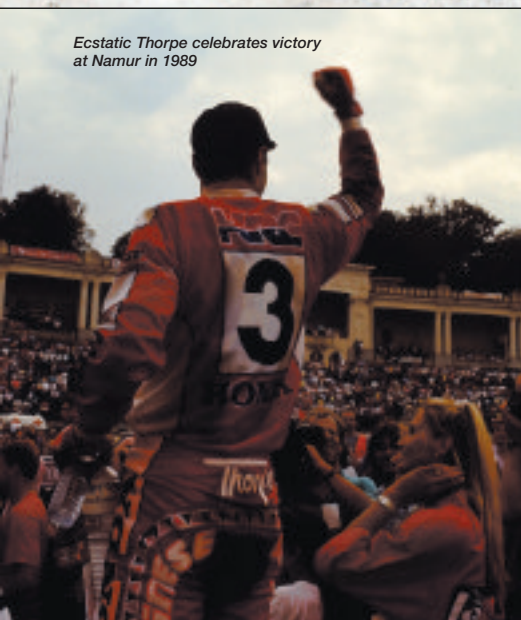




Representing Italy, America's newly crowned 125 world champ Trampas Parker skates his open class KTM across Gaildorf's blue-groove in the 1989 MX des Nations



Alex Puzar styles it for the fans in the 1993 Italian 250GP at Castiglione del Lago



Ecstatic Thorpe celebrates victory at Namur in 1989

Dave Thorpe and Joel Smets, before a fabulous Motocross des Nations contest in 2000 put it firmly on the 21st century map.

The next round of '04 visited another fine traditional track. Gallarate's precipitous hillside is clearly visible from aircraft flying into Malpenza in northern Italy, lying alongside the motorway just east of the airport. It hosted the first ever Italian 250GP in 1962 and over the next 30 years ran half a dozen more, won by such illustrious exponents as Jaroslav Falta, Georges Jobe and Donny Schmit. It also welcomed 500s in 1968 – won by Roger de Coster's CZ – and 1978, when Roger's greatest rival Heikki Mikkola (Yamaha) took the honours. That 2004 MX2 round fell to another Yamaha, ridden by the late Andrew 'Sharkey' McFarlane, before the series visited Neeroeteren, which had first welcomed a Belgian 125 round in 1997.

Townley then racked up victories at Uddevalla and Loket before the 2004 series visited the ultimate MX Theatre of Dreams at Namur, where 500cc world championship action had echoed through the trees since 1957 and MX des Nations since 1951. In '04 Antonio Cairoli claimed his first grand prix win on his De Carli Yamaha before the series moved on to yet another classic venue at Gaildorf, near Cologne in Germany. Scene of stupendous MX des Nations in 1985 and 1989 Gaildorf's slippery, super-fast cambers had first tested Europe's elite in 1980, when Andre Vromans (Yamaha) won, and became a 250GP staple in the 1990s. Kurt Nicoll (Honda) won there in 1994, Pit Beirer brought the house down in 1997 and Stefan Everts completed a Honda hat-trick in 1999. The final two rounds of 2004, both won by Townley, took in Ballykelly, in Ireland and the only 'fly-away' of the season, to Sun City in South Africa.

Besides returning to great destinations like Agueda, Namur, St Jean d'Angeley and Gaildorf Townley's rookie 2005 season in MX1 aboard the 450 KTM included several other delicious destinations. Matchams Park, Hampshire, traditional home of a famous annual

Bank Holiday international that used to attract enormous crowds and the best racers in the world, hosted round seven.

The next GP stopped off at the massive drops, climbs, twists and turns of Castiglione del Lago, sited spectacularly on the south-western corner of Lake Trasimeno, in Perugia, central Italy, where Jean-Michel Bayle (125 Honda) triumphed in the circuit's 1988 grand prix debut. Greg Albertyn (Honda) won the first 250GP he raced there in 1993 and 500s arrived in the late nineties.

Ben Townley, having already won his second ever 450GP in the Spanish round at Bellpuig, conquered Castiglione before winning again at St Jean d'Angeley. Sun City was once more the only trans-continental round before an impressive six-race run-in began at Nismes. This huge Belgian venue appeared on the grand prix scene in 1984, when Jeremy Whitley (250 Suzuki) won. It then secured a sequence of 125 and 250cc rounds, the greatest featuring an epic duel between Sebastien Tortelli (Kawasaki) and Paul Malin (Yamaha) in the 1996 Belgian 125 Grand Prix. The following year it held an MX des Nations won by the host nation (though dominated by Pit Beirer) and in 1999 the last Belgian 250GP of the 20th century, won by champion elect Frederic Bolley (Honda).

2005 trips to Loket and Gaildorf were followed by Arreton, on the Isle of Wight, where Townley beat Everts again, and the last two rounds visited another sand track at Lierop, in the Netherlands (homeboy Leon Giesbers grabbed his only ever grand prix win there in 1996) before the magnificent Desertmartin in Northern Ireland completed the championship tour.

Townley, the rival most feared by Stefan Everts, then absconded to the USA. So his last two European seasons were packed with majestic traditional motocross tracks that formed his memories and experience of grand prix racing. Is it any surprise that Qatar and Thailand 2016 didn't quite live up to his expectations of a world championship?



# MADPOQUE



## TOOFAST MAX HUNTS OUT THE PERFECT POWER DELIVERY FOR HIS HUSQVARNA FC250...

Words and photos by **Max Hind/TooFast Media**

I've had my hands on the FC 250 for a month or so now and have managed to clock about five or six hours on her so far – and I've got to admit I'm damn well enjoying the experience. I've been riding her in stock trim with all the stock settings just to get a good base feeling before we start to add a bit of bling to see where we can improve things a little.

I want to start this month by talking about the relatively new technology that's on a lot of MX bikes nowadays. As a diehard two-stroke rider a lot of these high-tech gizmos are completely new to me. The FC 250 has a little switch next to the throttle that doubles up as 1) a switch to change the map and 2) an aid to turn on traction control for the starts.

To kick things off let's talk about the different maps. I love

this idea in principle. To have the ability to change the power delivery to suit the type of track you're riding is awesome. We've all been there before, giving it beans on a slick, greasy track, ending up on our asses just because power delivery was a smidge too aggressive.

Don't get me wrong, this switch isn't a miracle cure and you'll still end up on your ass if you get it really wrong but after trying this little fella on a couple of different surfaces it's definitely a great way to get more out of your bike and boost confidence.

If you've got an FC 250 or you're thinking of getting one in the future you best make sure you read through the manual. This mapping stuff isn't quite as simple as I first thought! I initially had the impression that the two-position switch on >>





# ST!

## TOOFAST TOP FIVE!

Max's most amazing things he's loving on the FC 250 (so far)...

- 1 Electric start** – no doubt the ultimate four-stroke accessory
- 2 New air filter design** – this double pinned new filter makes changing a filter a breeze and pretty much impossible to get wrong
- 3 Map switch** – my new toy but so far so good and definitely not a novelty
- 4 Launch control** – yup, she's in the top five. You best hope no-one else has one of these if you don't!
- 5 Slim feel** – I still can't believe how slim and light this bike feels. It's pretty much as easy to chuck around as my 125!



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## DBR TESTED!

### Moto-Master oversize front disc

The only mod I've made so far since having the bike is fitting the oversize front brake disc that I had on the TC 125 last year. Since having one of these on my first DBR long-termer back in 2014 I've had a massive soft spot for discs of the

oversized variety.

The standard brakes on the FC 250 were good but you just get so much more feeling, and stopping power with this oversized disc which can be found in the Husqvarna accessory brochure. It's amazing the difference an extra inch or so makes. Now that I've got the starting and stopping boxes ticked all I need to do is find myself a race...



## DBR TESTED!

### TCX Comp Evo boots

No doubt you'll have read elsewhere in this magazine our in-depth feature on TCX boots. My little Italian adventure over to the TCX headquarters really opened up my eyes as to the complexity of boot design and the artistry that goes into creating a damn fine pair of kicks.

The folks at TCX kindly sent me over a fresh pair of boots straight from the Italian factory and my god are they sexy. The red, white and blue colour scheme makes me weep tears of joy every time I behold them. What I'm trying to say here is that they are a good looking pair of boots that most definitely challenge the best lookers among the competition.

In terms of comfort and break-in time these boots are up there with the best I've ever tried. It really does feel as though you're wearing a tennis shoe once you slip your foot into a TCX boot. Break-in time was pretty much non-existent, a couple of stretches here and there to work out the level of feeling and I was away. I literally put the boots on and hopped straight on the bike, straight onto the track. Gone are the days of wearing your new boots around the house for a few days before you could even think about turning a wheel.

Buckle function worked flawlessly and effortlessly which is another bonus, the only thing I'd say is make sure you fold in all the right flaps and bits to make doing the boots up as easy as it's supposed to be.

As I discovered on my trip to the Italian HQ, safety is key at TCX. Despite the insanely high comfort levels and the non-existent break-in time needed there's no feeling that this has taken away from the overall protection that the boots provide. My feet, ankles and lower leg feel very well protected and supported inside the TCX and I have the added confidence of knowing that the double flex system is in place to save my knees and ankles from overextending, helping me avoid injury.

So far I'm loving my TCX Comp Evo Michelins.

**DBR RIDDEN AND RATED SCORE: BOOTYLICIOUS!**



the bars was for standard map and aggressive map. However, this isn't quite the case. Position one always gives you the standard map but position two actually has several options dialled in which are changed by another map switch that can be found at the back of the air filter box.

You can set the this switch to soft (for softer response) or advanced (for direct response) and whichever one you set it to becomes the map for position two on the handlebar switch. After eventually finding this switch (it's hidden under a protective rubber cover) there are actually nine positions so I guess you can programme your own maps in there too if you have the right equipment and know-how.

My bike was set to the advanced position from the factory and I soon found this out after turning the handlebar map switch to position two on a slick track and ended up on my ass – twice!

Anyway, after finding out how to do things properly I can tell you that the changes to the map really do make a difference. In my short experience with this magic little switch I've found that on sandy surfaces I like the full blown experience in the advance mode. But in wet or slick conditions the 'soft' setting is the one to go for. The mode I've used the most so far is the standard mode, mainly because this is what it was set to when I got the bike and I've been enjoying it so much I haven't really felt the need to change it too often.

Later in the year we have plans to play with the mapping settings. Hardcore Racing are going to programme some maps that they found worked well on Rob Davidson's race bike at the Maxxis last year so I'm looking forward

to that. From now on I'm going make sure I test the different settings at all the different tracks that I go to and to see how much difference they make.

Linked to the map switch is the launch control and because I have now read the manual I know that this will only work if the little map switch in the airbox is set to the soft or advance mode. To switch it on it's a simple procedure – just flick the switch on the handlebars back and forth a couple of times when you're on the line and in neutral. You know when you've done the job because the FI light by the bar pad will flash orange. Don't do it too early though as you've only got three minutes before it turns itself off.

I had the opportunity to try out the launch control system at the Buttercup Farm MX track, which is one of very few practice tracks that has a permanent concrete start pad. This meant I could test the system on a mud start and a concrete start.

All I can say is wow! This bike really hooks up when using this little device. I haven't got a holeshot device fitted yet and to be honest with this secret weapon I don't think I'll need one. Off the dirt start I couldn't fault it as I got all the drive I could possibly wish for and it was a massive improvement over starting without it. On the concrete start it felt a bit weird as I could feel it doing its job a lot more as the tyres were trying to spin more freely on the slick concrete.

I've never really used a concrete start before so the whole experience was all a bit alien to me but there's no doubting that if I were trying to get out of a gate alongside a bike without this electronic wizardry I'd definitely have the advantage.



**DBR**  
**TESTED**

**6**





# RIPPED

## n' ripped!

AFTER WRESTLING TO REMOVE A VULCANISED GRIP FROM THE RM-Z'S THROTTLE TUBE DAN FINALLY GETS THE JOB DONE AND GOES RIDING TO CELEBRATE...

Words by **Dan Grove** Photos by **Matt Dean**

**A**fter last month's trip up north to ride some sand it was back to a familiar venue for my second outing on the little RM-Z. The Apex Motocross facility was the location and it was a little on the wet side on my visit but it was still perfectly rideable and with the addition of a pair of Metzeler MC4 tyres the unpredictable nature of the wood chip surface became a little more predictable.

The rear has been my winter tyre of choice for a few years now however I'd not used the front before and it was impressive. This tyre combo is available in most dealers for around the £80 mark fitted so if you have spare set of wheels ready for mud races this summer and you haven't used these before then I'd recommend giving them a go.

As it was pretty hard going I just used the day to get some laps in and didn't adjust anything on the bike. Reason being is because I won't be riding in these conditions this year so finding a good setting there probably wouldn't translate very well to the hardpack that I'll be riding for most of this year.

A weird thing happened while riding though as I made a mistake up the long hill and was thrown forward and the inside of my knee of my trouser leg got hooked on the front of the exhaust guard! Needless to say it looked like I was leaning over

Moto GP style which isn't ideal for motocross! If it happens again I'll look into bending the front of the standard exhaust guard in a bit to prevent this from happening.

After a day riding deep wood chip and with it being the third ride since the initial oil change it was time to replace the oil and filter as per the manual. To my surprise the oil still had a blue colour (which is the colour of the Putoline oil that I'm using) to it despite three days out on the bike comprising of around 170 minutes in total and all on deep surfaces.

I'm clearly not hammering the clutch like some people do in tough conditions and I've never really rode using the clutch to get the motor going anyway – I don't intend to either. Or, I'm not twisting the throttle hard enough as I've not lost any coolant either which is strange for the conditions that I've rode in or the Suzuki has a cooling system that's more than sufficient so perhaps that's the reason.

From now on oil changes will be every three rides with the oil filter replaced every six. In this change I also removed both oil strainers and strainer number one (that slots into the gearbox behind the gear lever) had a small amount of debris stuck to it although nothing like it was after the initial break in period. Oil strainer two (behind the ignition cover) had no debris stuck in the gauze whatsoever however I'll still continue >>



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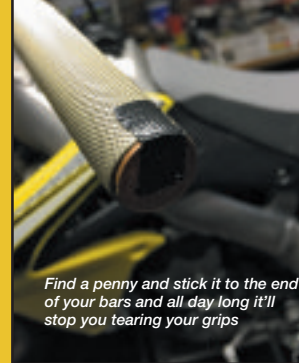
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to inspect it at every oil change. Oil strainer one can be inspected and cleaned which only takes five minutes and that can be done while the oil is draining out. Strainer two is a bit more work but it's straightforward enough. My initial oil change took two hours! This one took 30 minutes all in...

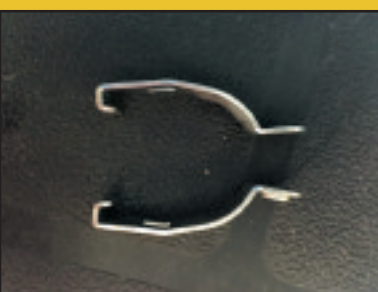
Next up was a handlebar change and I spent an afternoon doing it thanks mostly to the time taken to remove the vulcanised throttle grip. If you've just bought an RM-Z250 buy a replacement throttle tube ASAP as it's not worth the hassle. I replaced the stock Renthal Fatbars with some Renthal Twinwalls in the Yamaha/921 bend. These made the bike look completely different as the standard bars seem to have a lot of sweep and also seem to bend down a bit on the ends. You can also get to the air fork valves much easier and also slot the fuel tank breather into the headstock much easier without a big braceless bar pad getting in the way. Accompanying the bars were a pair of Renthal's dual compound, tapered 50/50 grips

and to finish off the control changes were a pair of grip donuts.

Just sat on the bike the bars made the ergonomics improve and on my next ride out at Westonbirt the changes were instantly obvious. With a straighter handlebar my arms and elbows were in the cringeworthy-ly named 'attack position' and it just felt 'right' having my favourite bar bend on the bike.

I'd also installed a Pro-Carbon Racing sump guard which is definitely a must for any four-stroke owner as without one the cases are a little prone to damage from rocks and roost. The guard is not only very protective and very easy to fit but looks incredibly trick too – a must have for all serious racers.

On the hardpack surface the bike did everything that I asked of it however between each session I started to work on fine tuning the suspension settings to get a better feel. I softened up both ends from the standard compression and rebound settings so next month I'll hopefully have a solid base setting



Dan reshaped this mounting bracket so it would fit the larger diameter Renthal Twinwalls



The Pro-Carbon sump guard keeps the RM-Z's undercarriage safe and looks pretty sexy n'all!



The Metzeler MC4s prove to work well at APEX

that I can share. As mentioned in my initial update, the bike hooks up from nothing and this was proven on a double-double right out of a corner. I cornered in third and the bike hooked up and got me through them easily. I did try second but then I was changing up on the take off or in the air before another double so I went for the safer option – however it felt just as quick as you could only go so fast through this section.

In rutted corners the bike just glided through them and I felt like I was going through them too fast in a way as I wasn't quite ready for the next corner where there was a short series of corners. As there was plenty of grip available the tyres and brakes got a good test and I couldn't fault anything in this department.

In fact into one corner I had a stoppie going on most laps where the Metzeler MC4 front gripped the ground so well and I found the front brake to be more than adequate for my needs over the whole track. As I get faster on the bike we'll see if more stopping power is needed but the first thing I'd do is bleed up the brakes but so far there's nothing to change here.

By next month I'll have a decent base setting for the suspension that I can share and I'll also try out the optional EFI couplers that come in the spares kit and change the fuel mapping. There's a lean and rich coupler included and the bike is equipped with a standard setting coupler. I've heard good things about the lean version so I'll plug that one in first and see how we go...





**B**uttercup Farm MX is a track that most certainly doesn't have a whole lot of natural elevation to play with but this hasn't stopped the Howard family from transforming what was once a big flat sugar beet field on the outskirts of Chatteris into one of the areas premium MX destinations.

Buttercup Farm an operational farm run by Howard and Sons. The MX part came to fruition back in 2002 when the very first variation of the track was built for the youngest of Howard and Sons sons to play on. The track was kept private until 2005 when the local race club, PJMC, lost the use of their home track at Fengate in Peterborough.

The Howard family offered their track as new a home base for the PJMC club and never looked back and now Buttercup Farm MX is almost unrecognisable compared to the track that PJMC first made use of in 2005.

To this day PJMC still uses Buttercup Farm as its one and only race track and other clubs such as Kensworth and East Anglia also use the track on a regular basis. However, the decline of club racing in recent times has seen local race clubs dropping like flies over the past few years. This means that the Buttercup Farm calendar is a little more open than in years gone by, allowing the track to open up for practice days on a far more regular basis.

Over the years the track has been redesigned and extended multiple times in order to keep it fresh and exciting for the PJMC regulars. Now coming in at approximately 1.2 miles in length with lap times being around the low 1:50s for the fast lads it's safe to say that the track has found its optimum layout.

It's fast and flowy with a good mix of obstacles that include nice supercross style bowl berms, tight flat corners, whoops and decent sized

jumps. This layout works well, it's fun and lends itself to some good racing.

"We're getting good feedback about the track layout at the moment," says Dave Howard. "If it ain't broke don't fix it so we aren't planning on changing up the layout again anytime soon."

Despite this the Howard family like to add something new to the track each and every year. For the 2016 season a new concrete start pad was laid over the off-season to add another cool and different element to the circuit.

Jumps are refaced regularly, soil is always being dragged back on top after being pushed out wide and watering is taken care of if and when the track needs it. The Howards take great pride in their track care being riders themselves and that really shows.

As well as the layout evolving over the years the Buttercup Farm soil has also experienced drastic changes. Back in the early days the rich fen soil was lovely and loamy – albeit with the odd sugar beet to be found – which meant lots of soft dust berms in the corners. Over the years this black fen soil was taken home by the many bikes that turned laps around the track and after just a few years the soil had become far more hardpacked and slick.

To combat this, piles of woodchip were slowly introduced around various parts of the track. Today the majority of the track features some of this woodchip element which means that after a day of being beat up the track can get incredibly rough and rutted, particularly when there's a bit of moisture in the soil. However, in the high summer the track can still get hardpacked and rather than the long deep ruts seen in the wetter months the woodchips become nice soft berms again.

This soil mix can have its positives and negatives. Obviously the woodchips soak up a lot of moisture, meaning that the track can be

opened and ridden in wetter conditions. However, as I said, the track can become incredibly rough, rutted and technical making a lap of what would otherwise be a fairly simple and easy layout rather difficult and intimidating for the less experienced riders. That is usually only the case at the very end of the day but when conditions do get like that even the best will be challenged!

The best way to check opening days and times is to check out Buttercup Farm MX on Facebook. Obviously, with the track regularly being used for race meetings the circuit isn't open on a weekly basis for practice. Normally Buttercup Farm MX hosts a couple of practice days per month with the exception of August when the track is shut due to planning restrictions and to allow for farming activities.

Buttercup Farm offers an array of facilities that make a day at the track a pleasure for all. The brick shower and toilet block is as luxurious as they come and the permanent catering service operated by the Howard family is second to none. The permanent lap scoring hut, start gates, toilet block and catering service makes Buttercup Farm the dream track for race clubs as pretty much everything needed to run a successful meeting is ready and waiting to be used.

Finally, marshals and medics are always on hand whenever the track is being used as well as a roaming marshal on an ATV. Safety is a top priority at Buttercup Farm

## CONCLUSION

The perfect race facility turned practice paradise.

**Difficulty** – can be very technical when rough but nothing too intimidating.

**Fun factor** – it's provided me many smiles over the years

**Facilities** – Jilly's world famous burger van is next level!

**Overall DBR score** – FENtastic



OUR LITTLE BUTTERCUP  
CHECKS OUT THE  
BUTTERCUP FARM MX  
PRACTICE FACILITY...



# TRACK ATTACK!



## ESSENTIAL INFO!

### BUTTERCUP FARM MX

**Location:** Chatteris, Cambs PE16 6TA

**Length:** 1.2 miles

**Prices:** Adults £30, kids £25

**Website:** Facebook.com/buttercupfarmmx

**Surface:** Fen loam and woodchip

**Shop:** No

**Catering:** Yes

**Kids Track:** No

**Coaching:** No

**Jet Wash:** No

**Toilets/wash block:** Yes with showers

**Opening times:** 10am – 4pm

**Difficulty:** Medium

**Enjoyment Factor:** High

**Suitability:** Everyone

**Session length:** 15 minutes

**Groups:** Four (Auto/65, 85, Intermediate, Expert)





# Project

A COMFORTABLE WIN IN THE BSMA BRIDGESTONE CHAMPIONSHIP IS FOLLOWED BY A MUCH TOUGHER DAY IN MAXXIS MXY2 AT CANADA HEIGHTS BUT THERE ARE PLENTY OF POSITIVES TO TAKE FROM THE MONTH FOR DBR PROJECT PILOT JOE CADWALLADER...

Words by **Sean Lawless** Photos by **Nuno Laranjeira**

**I**t's been a month of two halves for our DBR Project pilot Joe Cadwallader as he begins to find his feet following his last-minute deal to race the RMJ Academy FC250 Husqvarna UK machine.

He gave himself an early 17th birthday present when he took a comfortable win in the Senior Open class at the second round of the BSMA Bridgestone championship but had a much tougher day at round two of the Maxxis MXY2 series at Canada Heights.

"The BSMA rounds are quite hard and there are some fast riders there but I thought I should win and I did so I'm happy with that," says Joe. "I started with two wins but in the last one the race was only run for 10 minutes and I had a bad start and then clipped a post and stalled on the first lap.

"I came back to fifth and if the race had been run to its full length I think I would have got through to the lead and won that one as well."

Joe didn't bring his A game to Canada Heights but there are still plenty of positives to be drawn from his performance in what's still just his debut year in the championship.

"I qualified 10th which was good for me but I had all sorts of problems in the opening moto. I had a bad start and went around the first turn in about 20th but pulled through to just outside the top 10 and was coming through nicely when I crashed. My speed was good, it just didn't really come together.

"In the second race I went to the line and had a flat tyre. My dad fixed it but it all messed with my head a bit and although I got a good start I wasn't feeling right and dropped back."

Despite this small setback, Joe's confident that the results will come with more saddle time and continued hard work.

"The more I ride the bike the better I feel. I feel really good on it when I practice but I just need to pull everything

together on race day and reckon I'm capable of running in the top 10 in the Maxxis MXY2 once I get my fitness dialled in and do a bit more training with Rich-Mike."

Since Joe's promotion to the RMJ Pro Academy he's become a regular visitor to Liverpool John Moores University where the team – including sports nutrition expert Stephen Smith – are working on all aspects of his physical preparation.

"Joe's only just come onboard," explains Stephen, "so the first stage is to start optimising his body composition and then get started on his nutrition. We're taking him through the basics so he can start eating better and make sure he can start fuelling his racing and his training right."

RMJ Academy owner Richard-Mike Jones is playing close attention to Joe's development and feels there's a lot more to come from him as the season progresses and his training begins to kick in.

"In terms of what we're working on at the moment we're more technique-based over pace and we'll be concentrating on that before we start pushing him on the speed," says Richard-Mike. "We're also working on his fitness with the team at LJMU and so far, so good."

"Obviously, he won the BSMA National which was great – he did have a tough time at the Maxxis MXY2 but he qualified 10th which is a personal best. I'd like to see him break into the top six by the end of the season with a view to him being a championship contender the following year."

The next big race on Joe's calendar is round three of the Maxxis MXY2 at Hawkstone Park where he'll enjoy home advantage and be aiming to push his FC250 up the leaderboard.

**DBR will be following Joe and the RMJ Academy Husqvarna every month so stay tuned for further updates...**





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Martin Barr



Shaun Simpson

Having raced for many years I know how important it is to go in to every race knowing you can reach the end with good vision. This unfortunately doesn't always just involve your goggle preparation. Making sure your goggles and eyes stay sweat free during any race or practise session is a number one priority of mine. Linking up with DryBrow in 2016 I have been able to trust the design, fit and function of the product which has eliminated all my problems completely. It's refreshing to be a part of a brand that wants to push things to the next level in a sport like motocross. I believe that everyone on the start line could benefit from using this amazing new product.

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**DBR  
TESTED**

## DRYBROW SWEAT ABSORBING HEADWEAR LINERS

**M**ost hardened motocross racers know how annoying it is to hit a big bump, or mistime a jump late on in a moto and have your sweat saturated goggle foam empty its contents down the inside of your lens. If you're lucky it might only be a small splash and it will only distract you slightly but more often than not it'll be so bad you have no option but to ditch your goggles completely if you want to see where you're going.

But how do you combat this type of dreaded goggle interior downpour? Well, up until recently you either had to wedge some kitchen roll between your noggin and helmet liner or purchase yourself some lady products – y'know, the ones with wings – and then stick 'em strategically inside your lid. Both options work a treat in soaking up the sweat but can be problematic in other ways – the kitchen roll tends to ruck up and is uncomfortable while the other... well, people look at you funny when you're buying them, innit?

Step forward drybrow, a company whose aim it is to find 'a solution to damp, smelly headgear, sweat in our eyes, foggy masks and visors not to mention hat hair and makeup stains!' – all legitimate problems that us off-road riders face, right? Their answer is a super absorbent, ultra thin, disposable liner that's designed to fit inside any hat, helmet, cap or miscellaneous headwear item.

The finished product is probably best described as a forehead-sized, sticky-backed, felt strip that sticks into your helmet (the padded bit at the front that goes against your forehead). Once there it basically sucks up all the fluids you sweat out while riding and then can be pulled out and disposed off before your next session. As the packet says – 'press them in, whip them out. No mess, no fuss'.

When you figure out exactly where in your lid they need to be stuck – it might take a time or two to get this spot on and we drew some lines with a permanent marker so we got it consistently spot on afterwards – they're really not noticeable in any negative way. When you're

riding the liner draws fluid direct from your forehead as soon as it's released and then locks it away – Pampers style – until you can change the drybrow between motos.

Now we haven't scientifically tested this or anything but we reckon that one single drybrow will hold so much sweat you'd probably suffer the effects of dehydration before it released any moisture back out which is way more than you should ever have to ask of it.

Key members of the DBR Test squad have run drybrow helmet liners for several weeks now and feedback is almost totally positive with the only negative comment being the drybrow's habit of shedding a small amount of downy fluff which 'stuck to my eyebrows, man' or something. Frickin' diva.

Seriously though the drybrow works and works well. Whether you feel it's worth spending almost 70 pence a session – a pack of 10 costs £6.99 – on soaking up sweat is up to you. If you do then you'll be glad to know you can get drybrow products delivered directly to your door from [www.drybrow.com](http://www.drybrow.com)...







# FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE



STEVE DIXON'S NEW SIGNING VSEVOLOD BRYLYAKOV IS OPENING SOME EYES WITH HIS OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCES ON THE DRT KAWASAKI – BUT WHO IS HE, WHERE DID HE COME FROM AND WHAT DOES HIS MONIKER ACTUALLY MEAN IN CATALAN?



Words by Adam Wheeler Photos by Ray Archer



**M**any people had difficulty pronouncing the name of the rider that Steve Dixon's Monster Energy DRT Kawasaki team decided to take a punt on for 2016.

After some peachy times with Zach Osborne, Dean Ferris and Max Anstie in MX2, Dixon eyed two ventures this season – resurgence with Tommy Searle, and some more of his development/elevation magic with a younger prospect.

Vsevolod Brylyakov has already caused a stir just five Grands Prix into his term with the British crew but where did the 20 year old come from? What's his story and how has Dixon done it again?

'Brylyakov' is a name that has hovered around in Grand Prix for a few years and has been submerged in that strange and fluctuating mid-group in MX2 that combine emerging talent, riders struggling to break through, those on the fast-track, wealthy aspirants

and relentless hopefuls.

Slight, fair-headed and with a loose and barrelling riding style that indicated that '18' was one of the harder-edged competitors 'Seva' was still however hard to notice as injuries largely meant he was dipping in and out of the class. A Honda rider for 2014/15 it was last year that he finally matured in terms of strength, fitness and confidence (talking to Seva in his excellent English it is clear that he is an level-headed athlete, independent and used to managing many areas of his life singlehandedly) to push that surname into top five prominence. It was in the middle of 2014 when the Dixon operation first had a blip on their radar.

"I first saw him at Teutschenthal [Germany]," recounts Ashley Kane who describes himself as a Jack-of-all-trades for the team but has been one of Dixon's closest confidants for a number of years and fills an important, unofficial consultancy role. One that was responsible for Osborne, Ferris and Anstie coming into the set-up and helped nurture the potential that

Billy Mackenzie showed in the Noughties.

"I was watching the riders come through the section that goes past the pit lane and thought 'who's that?'. He just had that bit of aggression and determination that caught the eye. He must have finished 18th or 19th that weekend [he was actually 14th overall] but I had already looked on the results sheets to see the name and number. He just didn't seem to give up, and I mentioned him to Steve that day actually. He didn't post the results but we saw the potential."

A year later and in the same mid-season period Dixon was coming to terms with Max Anstie's decision to end a two-year association and move to factory Husqvarna for this final tilt in MX2 for 2016. Weeks later and Brylyakov would start to create some momentum. A fourth place at the Grand Prix of Sweden would be the highlight until he wrecked his shoulder at Kegums in Latvia and it largely snuffed his progress. A dispute with his current J-Tech team meant his future was briefly uncertain.





Dixon and Kane had already decided to make an approach.

"We were not worried about Seva coming in and having to follow Max, we figured that getting a rider like Tommy would take care of the limelight – so to speak – while we thought that we could work with Seva and grow with him. Ash spotted him and then we saw a good project," recounts Dixon.

"We haven't really had the budget to match the bigger teams so we have to look and spend wisely," voices Kane. "The team has a good record but it has become more and more competitive [to find talent] in the last 10 years because riders are much more switched on when it comes to training and getting the physical side of the job right – there has been a lot of input from specialists, more than before. So getting it right in choosing a rider has become more difficult.

"It is easy to spend and go and buy a rider that can fight for Grand Prix wins but if you give a rider the right set-up – and Steve builds

a very good motorcycle – and dedicated staff then you will really see what people can do," he continues. "It is a very fine line between a rider who can reach the top five and another that can push for podiums and more.

"Of course, we are constantly looking and watching," he adds. "I was in Valkenswaard checking out the European classes and also MX2. Also the Australian Nationals. You cannot limit your scope, motocross is a global sport and it should be treated globally. Brylyakov was a great move for us and the right one at the right time."

We actually meet Seva in former rider and now trainer Chris Hay's house in California. It is early in the supercross season and Brylyakov is in the States with Searle and other members of DRT sorting their pre-GP prep in the run-up to Qatar.

He's quiet, almost a little shy and is clearly trying to feel his way into a British group after having been based among Italians (Gariboldi and J-Tech) for the last three years. We grab

some photos and have a chat and then later sit down for a more formal conversation in the paddock of the San Diego SX and outside the vast walls of Petco Park.

Seva might be adept with his English ("he has a better sense of humour than I thought he would," says Dixon) but he actually takes time to think about his answers and it's a refreshing conversation ("I thought he was polite and down to earth," says Kane. "I thought he was very grounded and knew what he wanted; you can tell quite a lot through first impressions.").

If he continues to surprise with his riding and results (a first podium is already in the bag) then his voice will become far more prevalent as 2016 rolls on and onto next year when athletes like Alex Tonkov, Anstie, Herlings move out of MX2 and Brylyakov will be running at the forefront.

**DBR:** 2015 ended quite abruptly for you. Was it frustrating to get that injury because it seemed like other teams and a lot of people were >>







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Seva checks the qualifying times in Qatar

starting to look at the momentum you were gathering?

**VB:** "Very disappointing because I was making the results and starting to close-in on the podium in GPs and the shoulder injury effectively kicked me out of competition and definitely out of the top five."

**DBR:** The shoulder can also be a complicated joint to fix...

**VB:** "The problem we had was a broken ligament and the Acromion bone came out. I also had problems around my ribs and it was a strange injury. It took a lot of recovery time and I spent two months in a sport medical centre in Russia. It was the longest period of treatment I had ever done and it was strange to deal with. I've had normal fractures and broke my back one but the problem with this one was that I didn't really feel that I had to stay away from the bike. I was still racing in Lommel and in the Czech Republic but eventually had to walk away because I didn't have the strength to make the results. You always have to be 100 per cent for GPs."

**DBR:** How did you initially get to Europe?

**VB:** "I was a kid! And the first time was in 2006 when I was riding 65s. I had some good results in the European Championship and was second, fighting for the title and then had a few seasons out. I was back in 2010 with the Suzuki International team and fighting for a European title again with people like Tim Gajser and Brian Bogers and every season after that I was trying to find some way to stay here – some sponsors or teams that would help me keep going."

"It was difficult for a Russian kid because we come from far away, we have to stay away from home a long time and not many teams believed in Russians at that moment. I've been living on my own since I was 15. I'm used to training just with my mechanic and doing my physical work alone. I'm lucky to have a guy, Roberto Manzaroli, in Italy helping on the personal training side and with working during pre-season. Most of the time I'm by myself – washing, cooking, cleaning. In the beginning it was a bit complicated but you get used to it."

**DBR:** Was it difficult to get noticed? Was it something you could only do via results?

**VB:** "I think an important part was being known as a good guy and being good to people around you. Luckily I had some friends in Europe and I've kept good relationships with the teams and people I have been with. I had a great contact and friend in Holland who helped me out when I was at home and without a bike to ride. I was lucky to make those relationships."

**DBR:** Were your family concerned when you moved to Europe so young?

**VB:** "They were but they knew what I was doing and how I was spending my days. They built my character and they trusted me. They 'let me go' and took that risk. Honestly the first years alone in Europe were not that good for me. I was not practicing at the same intensity as I do now but I was just a kid. I felt lonely every day. I'd look out of the window and see an empty street and felt pretty alone."

**DBR:** How did you get through that?

**VB:** "There wasn't much choice. I made the choice to be where I was and I had to get through it. I did it through determination to race motocross and be one of the top guys. I was thinking about that a lot and it kept me going."

**DBR:** Your English is really good...where did that come from?

>>



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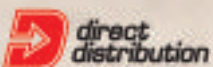
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*Brylyakov showed real promise in Argentina but better was to come in Mexico a week later*

**VB:** “Actually my mum was the first person who pushed me to learn English and she put me into an English school in Russia when I was seven. It all started from there and speaking it day by day and then when I came to Europe. My parents don’t speak English so it was only me who could talk to the teams and the sponsors. Obviously riding for a British team now helps even more and in the first two or three weeks I was thinking ‘what are these guys saying to each other?’ – it was difficult! I lived in Italy for two and a half years so I can speak and understand Italian.”

**DBR:** Where did you live?

**VB:** “When I was with the Gariboldi team then I lived near Milan and the last year and a half I was near Parma with J-Tech Honda. Now I am moving around and have been in the UK.”

**DBR:** It must be hard to have a feeling of ‘home’ sometimes...

**VB:** “It is difficult. Most of the riders and people in the sport don’t really know how I feel when I’m not at home but year-by-year I am moving around and changing and I came to realise that ‘home’ is where my family is. I’ve become used to living and moving. I probably only see my parents for three or four weeks a year. They don’t come to the GPs because it is not easy to travel due to visas and costs.”

**DBR:** Where are they in Russia?

**VB:** “I was born in a town – Izhevsk – over 1200km east from Moscow. It is in the middle of nowhere, right in the middle of Russia! The country is so big, as everyone knows. I’ll head there for Christmas and New Year’s when there is maybe five metres of snow and it’s minus 25. I go snowboarding and see friends and it is probably the best two-three weeks of holidays I can have.”

“My parents were both professional biathlonsists so there was always a good chance

I’d be an athlete when I was born. The decision about motocross came when I was around four. They both work around the sport [biathlon] still. My mum does massage and Spa treatments, while my dad is a personal trainer. He made my career. I had some guys training and helping me as a kid but the person beside me and keeping me on the right path was my dad.”

**DBR:** Where did the bikes come from?

**VB:** “There were people around who rode and our city was home to a good team that competed in the national championship. They let me try a bike when I was small and I kept asking to go again. From there I think it was all about luck, opportunity and the timing in life. Generally we were always struggling to find sponsors to buy bikes.”

**DBR:** With athletes as parents then it must have been a healthy household...

**VB:** “A lot of Russian diet is healthy but





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honestly I didn't care too much about food when I was younger. It is only in the last two or three years that I have really looked into it. Everybody is working hard in GPs so you have to look for any tiny, little thing that might give the advantage over someone else."

When it comes to Brylyakov's nationality there is a sense of déjà vu going on. The first Russian to burst to prominence this decade also did it from within the confines of a British team – Evgeny Bobryshev with CAS Honda in 2010 ("Bobby actually had good things to say about Seva – he said that he was a hard worker and a good trainer and he was right," says Dixon). Although an alliance with a UK team means some potential visa hiccups for Russians (both Brylyakov and Bobryshev have come unstuck trying to enter the UK in recent years) there is something about the uncomplicated and pragmatic approach by both parties that seems to click.

On the athlete's side Kane cites a slight willingness to go the extra mile. "I think overseas riders need to make bigger sacrifices than, say, those from the UK or France for example so when they have the chance they really grab it and I think you can go back to the days of Grant Langston [South African] to see

that – he struggled to qualify but then made big progress to win the championship in his second year. Those guys just seem to understand that there is a limited window."

"I suppose you could say it is the 'foreign' mentality," ruminates Dixon. "I saw it also with [Brian] Jorgensen, [Kenneth] Gundersen, Ferris and Zach. He has come from a long way and we saw a level of dedication there. Some people just quit a bit too easily. Through our initial talks I saw some good signs and he just wanted to listen and learn."

Brylyakov has tamed the KX250F and installed himself in the top 10 of MX2, the podium in Mexico could be the turning point. "Seva has surprised me on the bike," evaluates Dixon. "In the beginning he was a bit too loose and I was worried about crashes but being in the US in pre-season seemed to calm him down. He gets frustrated with himself but I think Tommy's influence had been good for him and when he tells Seva not to beat himself up about little things then I can see him taking it in. Overall he has adapted well."

**DBR:** Talking about Grand Prix and Russians – people might see Evgeny Bobryshev as this big strong rider and Aleksandr Tonkov as this crazy guy who could win or crash. So what kind of >>



*South America is a long way from home but Seva now has fans right around the world*





While some struggled with the inconsistent surface of the Leon circuit Seva seemed comfortable



'type' can they expect from you?

**VB:** "I don't know! I think being Russian comes with a 'name' or a 'meaning': a Russian 'power'! I keep fighting every inch and second on the track and I don't let anybody 'go' easily. I think I am still a dark horse in the GPs and nobody expects much from me I guess. I don't really care and I just do my job. We will see how it turns out..."

**DBR:** Is it quite exciting to be that 'mystery'?

**VB:** "Yeah, I guess but I'm not thinking about it [how he is perceived] too much even though I know you need people to speak about you around the paddock. The sport is also about the sponsors and people that make it happen. You

are not a professional athlete if you don't have fans. I don't think too much about what I should be. I am who I am and get on with the job. I hope the results will talk."

**DBR:** The last Russian Grand Prix in Semigorje three years ago saw a lot of people turn up to watch...

**VB:** "It is a big country and there had been a lot time without a Grand Prix so when that happened in 2012 it was exciting for everybody and I remember well seeing all those people and how they supported riders like me, Bobby and Tonkov."

**DBR:** There is talk of maybe another one

happening soon in St Petersburg...

**VB:** "I don't know actually and I would want to be someone spreading rumours but it still takes a lot of money to make a GP happen. I hope there will be one soon and I know it will be a nice race with a lot of people again."

Being based in Barcelona I felt duty bound to inform Seva that if he ever came to Catalunya (and there was talk of resurrecting the Grand Prix at Bellpuig only last year) then in Catalan his shortened name would translate directly to the word 'onion'. He smiles. It would seem that in the soon-to-be 21 year old's case then there are just a few layers to peel back before Grand Prix stardom hits.





*A 2-6 scorecard netted Brylyakov third overall in Mexico and his first ever trip to the GP podium*





# NICE N' HARD!

**EXCITING TIMES AHEAD FOR  
ALFREDO GOMEZ AND ALL AS  
THE HARD ENDURO SEASON  
GETS WARMED UP WITH A  
SOUTH AMERICAN STUNNER...**

Words and photos by Future7Media



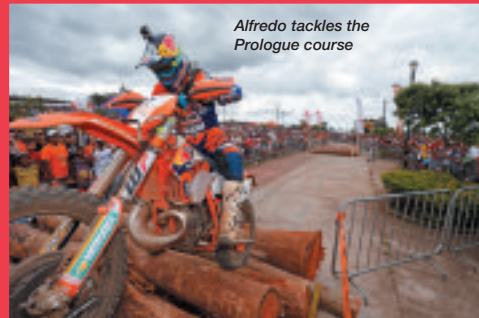




*The Minas Riders route is full of water crossings*



*Alfredo tackles the Prologue course*





**If the record books are anything to go by then we're in for a Hard Enduro treat in 2016. From the first four major races this year we've witnessed four different winners, proving things are about as competitive as it gets right now.**

In January Jonny Walker won at Ales Treme in France, Wade Young put Sherco on the top step of the podium at Hells Gate, while Graham Jarvis delivered the goods at a rain soaked Tough One. And now, at the first Red Bull Hard Enduro race of the season, KTM's Alfredo Gomez has been victorious.

Though we can never count out the mighty Graham Jarvis from topping the podium at any given race, it seems the King of Hard Enduro's dominant reign is not as impenetrable as it once was. Making a bold statement at the Red Bull Minas Riders, Gomez put in a head turner of a victory.

Hardly putting a foot wrong for the majority of the week long race, the Spaniard won three of the four tough days convincingly. Now with the big one – Erzberg – just around the corner, all eyes are on the Austrian Iron Giant to see just who will win again...

**DBR:** Alfredo, with a win already in the bag in Brazil, you've certainly established yourself as a 2016 front runner. You've got to be pleased about that?

**AG:** "Certainly. I think things are looking good. I want to win this year so to win that first race of the series is pretty cool."

**DBR:** Winning three out of four tough days at the Minas Riders, against Graham Jarvis, isn't easy. But you made it look that way. What's changed?

**AG:** "I think it's a combination of a lot of things.

I'm fit and healthy, my riding is good, my navigation is now there and moving to KTM has helped it all sort of click into place."

**DBR:** Has there really been that much of a difference jumping from Husqvarna to KTM?

**AG:** "The bikes might look similar but believe it or not they're quite different. Especially the chassis, which is so important in Hard Enduro. I felt comfortable with the KTM from the word go. It suits my riding style much more. I'm more confident on it."

**DBR:** And the navigation aspect, how's that now?

**AG:** "I've got my head around it now. It's been a three-year learning process. Minas Riders was only my fourth race with the GPS. Compared to someone like Graham that's nothing. It's not easy riding at speed and watching the GPS >>







*The view in Brazil is stunning but the racers don't get chance to enjoy it*

to make sure you're hitting your markers. I'm comfortable to lead now and not follow so much."

**DBR:** With a win at Minas Riders it's clear your SuperEnduro commitments haven't slowed you down. How do you rate your winter indoors?

**AG:** "I was fifth overall so I'm happy with that. Hitting the podium in Madrid and a race win in Germany was a major high too. I was also the only guy on a two-stroke. At times it was a disadvantage, especially with the starts, but it suits my style. I'm better on it than the four-stroke. I think I need to work on my SuperPole.

I find it hard to do that one fast lap and I never really got a decent grid position because of it. A better SuperPole would help improve my chances of a better start and race result."

**DBR:** How important was it to win your first Red Bull Hard Enduro at Extreme XL Lagares back in 2014?

**AG:** "Lagares was really my first win in a Red Bull Hard Enduro. I'd been trying hard for a while so to get it done and also do it at a race that's fairly close to home was pretty cool. It's a tough race. We cover a lot of miles in about a day and a half. There's the city prologue

through the streets in Porto, then a night race before racing around six hours the next day. The event organiser is a fan of extreme enduro, not hard enduro, so he tries to go that extra mile. Nothing's overly impossible but the slippery rivers make it so difficult because grip is next to nothing. Winning in conditions like that made me realise that I can win in this sport."

**DBR:** Are you pleased with the direction Hard Enduro is going in?

**AG:** "It's certainly growing, it's crazy how popular it is now. This year we've races in >>

# WHAT THAT?

## Who or what is a Minas Riders?

For the first time ever, Red Bull Hard Enduro headed to South America. The Red Bull Minas Riders, with a format similar to Romaniacs, was held in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. Those with attention to detail will know that Belo Horizonte has also been home to a round of the SuperEnduro World Championship for the last three years.

In a collaboration with the Brazilian SuperEnduro organisers, Martin Freinademetz – the man behind the Romaniacs – brought the tried and test format to Brazil. Four days of racing saw competitors compete for over 23 hours.

Day one was a short but tough 60 kilometre loop followed by a traditional Hard Enduro styled prologue. Things then stepped up a

notch with day two bringing competitors 160 kilometres across the mountains to Ouro Preto, before day three brought them all the way back. Signing things off with another 160 kilometre loop around Belo Horizonte, it's safe to say no one was wanting more when they reached the final Red Bull finish line arch.

"It's been a proper race," told Paul Bolton – the Gold class third place finisher. "No one really knew what to expect coming here but we've been given a bit of everything. I know it's been a mammoth task putting something like this together – I think they've been working at it for two years or more – but it's been a hard race and a good one too.

"I'm chuffed with the result. To put it on the podium is always special. I feel like I rode well. I was consistent all week, which is something I've been trying to achieve for a while now. I think I'm finally beginning to ride with more maturity – I must be getting old!"

With three classes, Gold, Silver and Bronze, Mark Kirby was the only other British rider to make the trip out. Competing in Silver he ended his week in a very impressive eighth overall.

"Eighth's not too bad for an old bugger like me," admitted Kirby. "I had a good week, I'm

bloody knackered now but it's been good. Of course there are things I'd like to do differently. There are mistakes I made that will eat away at me. On day one I got wire wrapped up in my rear wheel and that cost maybe 10 minutes to cut it off.

"Then on day three I had two mistakes. I missed the service point for fuel and food. That used up too much energy and then to add further insult I ran out of fuel about 20 minutes from the end. When you make one mistake more follow. You've really got to be on your game because that's how you lose time.

"But I've loved it. It's been a mixture between a number of races. Places felt like the Roof of Africa and obviously others like Romaniacs. But unlike Romania we're not climbing or descending for two hours at a time, the mountains aren't as high. But the long days, hard trails and hot weather do make it equally tough.

"I'm pretty sure I'll be back. We came here not knowing what to expect but it's been a lot of fun. Also the bike rental scheme was a breeze too. Being able to step off your bike at the end of each day and have someone else spanner it is ace – what's not to love about that!"









## Wallace Cup

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## Webb wins...

...BUT Jonny Walker retains SuperEnduro series lead in Mexico

## ON TOP OF THE WORLD

JONNY WALKER WINS IN ARGENTINA



## RAMETTE RETAINS AX TITLE

THOMAS KEEPS CROWN AT WILD, WILD WEMBLEY



THOMAS KEEPS CROWN AT WILD, WILD WEMBLEY



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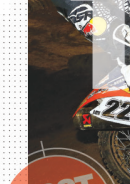
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South America and also South Africa as part of the Red Bull Hard Enduro series so it's good to see it grow outside of Europe like this. And all races are different too. Maintaining that is good for the sport. In the future I'd like to see a race in North America or Canada. That would be the next step in terms of reaching more riders and gaining more exposure."

**DBR:** What do you think are the right ingredients to make up the perfect Hard Enduro course?

**AG:** "I think the sport is finding its feet. There's a consistency to events now. Organisers are getting the level right. Personally, it's got to be long, that's really what makes it hard. You need a mixture of difficult and fast sections but they need to be spaced out. People need to be able to ride their bikes a distance. They need to cover some miles. Being stuck in a river bed or impossible climb for two hours isn't fun for anyone and riders won't want to come back."

**DBR:** You've been in two races, Ukupacha in Ecuador 2013 and Erzberg 2015, where the >>



The South American fans love watching a bit of Hard Enduro action



tracks became impossible. How do you deal with that in a race environment?

**AG:** "When you reach a dead end like that you've just got to take stock of the situation and keep calm. In Ukupacha they were way too ambitious. They went beyond extreme due to inexperience, I suppose. Graham and myself had to team up to make it home. Erzberg was the same. We all know what happened. It didn't look ideal as a race but I think we worked for the best outcome."

**DBR:** Up until that infamous "Downtown" section you were one of the fastest guys on the track, right?

**AG:** "Yeah. I had a shocker of a start. I crashed on one of the first hill climbs and was about 30th or something. But I was riding really good and was charging through. I was up to third by Carls Diner and then passed Jonny Walker shortly afterwards. We still had some tough sections to go so winning was looking possible."

**DBR:** Do you view Erzberg as a victory?

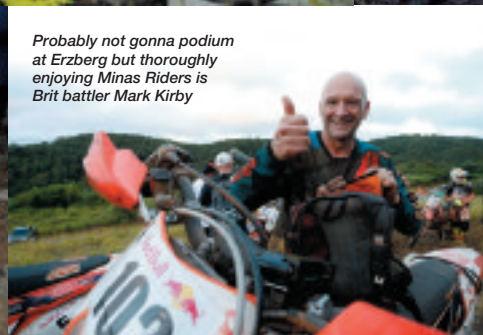
**AG:** "It's a weird one. It's a win but not a standalone victory. I suppose that one will always have an asterisk."



Wade Young starts as an Erzberg favourite

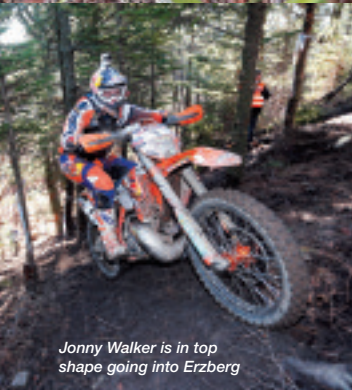


Graham Jarvis will be looking to win in Austria



Probably not gonna podium at Erzberg but thoroughly enjoying Minas Riders is Brit battler Mark Kirby





Jonny Walker is in top shape going into Erzberg



Taddy will be looking to top the Iron Giant once more



Mario Roman is a threat to win every time he lines up



Lars Enock makes a splash in Brazil

# GIANT SLAYERS!

## The favourites to overcome Erzberg's Iron Giant

The Red Bull Hare Scramble at Erzbergrodeo is the Daddy of Hard Enduro. It's the one everyone who's anyone wants to win. From the 1500 entrants to the fistful of finishers, there can only be one winner – 2015 aside. So who's on form to deliver the goods in 2016?

### Jonny Walker

With two outright wins at Erzberg – plus a joint winner in 2015 – it's hard not to consider Walker as a hot favourite. The manner in which he won 2014 was startling. He dominated it from start to finish and hardly broke a sweat doing so. But will his recently broken leg dampen his spirits?

### Graham Jarvis

Graham Jarvis has been through the wars at Erzberg but he's still tamed the Iron Giant twice. Despite turning 41 years of age it's never a good idea to underestimate the King of Hard Enduro. He prefers it when they build 'em mean and the Red Bull Hare Scramble is one of the baddest of them all. He led in 2015 until the moment the race was nulled. With a decent start, Jarvis has enough in the tank to lead again.

### Alfredo Gomez

A joint winner in 2015 and now winner of the Red Bull Minas Riders, Alfredo Gomez is on flying form in 2016. With a wealth of trials skills to match Jarvis and Walker, Gomez' confidence is currently riding high.

### Wade Young

A switch to Sherco has fired up Wade Young to succeed. With factory support finally behind him, Young looked good at the pre season Ales Treme and then beat Jarvis for victory at Hell's Gate. A muddy Tough One wasn't so kind to the South African. He'll be hoping for a dry run in Erzberg.

### Taddy Blazusiak

As the Red Bull Hare Scramble record holder, Taddy Blazusiak is back for revenge in 2016. The Iron Giant literally knocked the five-time winner out with a single punch just 30 seconds into last year's long awaited return. It's been over four years since he last raced and won at Erzberg.

### The others

Walker, Jarvis, Gomez, Young and Blazusiak may grab the headlines but there is a wealth of talent on the start line for 2016. Mario Roman was the only other finisher in 2015. And don't forget he completed the course without help and on a busted knee. Fit for 2016, he's a dark horse for success. Add in Paul Bolton, Cody Webb – top 10 in 2014 – plus SuperEnduro champ Colton Haaker making his debut ensures a bumper entry list for May 26-29.







# BOOT Champs!

**TOOFAST MAX VISITS TCX HQ TO GET A  
FEEL FOR THE COMPANY AND THE ETHOS  
BEHIND IT - OH, AND CHECK OUT THEIR  
ALL-NEW COMP EVO MICHELIN BOOTS TOO...**

Words and photos by Max Hind

**"The human foot is a masterpiece of engineering and a work of art," reckoned Leonardo da Vinci who, no doubt about it was a wise ol' chap so we'd probably best take note of what he says.**

The foot and ankle, as complex and magnificent as they may be, are rather delicate things really. Therefore it's imperative that while riding our dirt bikes we provide these masterworks of genetic engineering with the appropriate support and protection in order to keep them in good working condition.

However this can sometimes be overlooked, fairly often we dirt bikers can be found guilty of being rather vain. I mean we love to at least look good while trying to go fast. This means that from time to time we sacrifice our safety in

the pursuit of having the hottest set up in the pits. So with this in mind, when a motocross boot comes along that is damn right sexy but also provides significant protection and support we best take some notice.

TCX is an Italian brand that focuses in the production of specialist boots and footwear. This can be seen in their 'focus on boots' motto as well as in the top notch quality of their products. DBR were recently invited over to their Italian headquarters just outside of Venice to have a gander at the TCX home base and to check out how these pieces of moto art are developed and manufactured.

TCX's Alessia Capodicasa gave us a tour of the factory and talked us through (and showed us) the creation and birth of a TCX boot.





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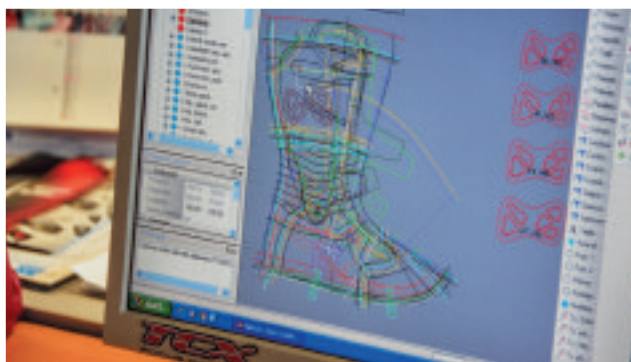
## HISTORY

The original company was founded way back in 1889 and focused mainly on mountaineering boots and later on safety shoes for police, fire fighters and other work places. The off-road side of the business was born in 1999 under Oxstar branding. In 2007 the company was purchased by a private equity group and a subsequent rebranding took place – this was the birth of the TCX name.

After many years of focusing on the mountaineering and safety boots the company eventually started what would become (and still is) a very vital part of the business – the OEM production of products for other brands such as BMW, Ducati, Fly racing and Nike.

“We have worked with Nike in the off-road market. It is always a good story to tell as they are a prestigious corporation – they came to us to develop their motocross boot project which was worn by James Stewart and Ryan Dungey. We did a complete R&D and production of the prototypes and boots worn by the riders,” explains Alessia.

This OEM production enabled the company to gain knowledge and develop a very strong knowhow on boot building focussing on the safety aspect.



## IDEOLOGY

The most important part of the TCX DNA is its focus on safety. Every single boot in the TCX collection has been CE certified since day one. To this day TCX still research and develop new ways and methods that can help protect the motorcycle rider. This continual search for innovative solutions in terms of safety for riders is what TCX likes to think separates them from the competition.

Another thing that separates TCX from the competition is their devotion to just manufacturing boots. “One aspect that has most likely been a big part in helping TCX become a successful brand worldwide is our ‘focus on boots’ policy.

“As I said we have developed a very good know how in the manufacturing of motorcycle boots. We investigated the possibility of a brand extension into other areas and products such as clothing and so on but ultimately we decided that just focusing our efforts on our own brand boots and boots for OEM companies was the key to our success.

“The result of this can be seen in the safe and solid performance of our brand, we produce more or less 250,000 pairs of boots each year that are distributed across 60 countries. From that point of view we have been very successful but on the other side the fact that prestigious brands such as BMW, Ducati and KTM have chosen TCX to produce their boots says a lot.”





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## QUALITY CONTROL

Another key aspect of the TCX ideology is the focus on quality control and quality assurance.

"Having a decent product at a good price is important but at TCX quality has to be at the highest level. This is another key value of the TCX brand," explains Alessia as she shows us where TCX conduct their quality control checks.

TCX are able to keep control of the quality of their products firstly through testing the quality of the raw materials as they arrive at the Italian headquarters. This ensures that all the materials used to make up the boot are up to scratch. Secondly, TCX's main production line is located in Romania and is made up of 180 people. This line is managed by Italian TCX personnel which allows them to organise the production of their products and ensure that quality control steps are run during the production process, after the process and then again when the products arrive back in Italy.

Durability tests are also conducted beforehand in order to decipher which materials last the longest and should be used in production. TCX's test riders wear the boots for a certain amount of hours and TCX then look at the wear and tear and compare results.



## PARTNERSHIPS

TCX believe it's important to work with prestigious brands and companies such as Gore-Tex (a trademarked water proof fabric) in order to ensure that their products are of the highest quality possible. Gore-Tex implements strict quality control procedures to companies and brands using their product in order to guarantee that their product is used correctly and effectively.

"This partnership with Gore-Tex gave a strong value to TCX and positions us at the high end level of the market. This partnership also helped to teach us how to build boots to very high production and quality standards."

Although this Gore-Tex technology isn't utilised within TCX's motocross range, partnerships such as this paved the way for what was to come next.

"Another important deal similar to this is the one that started two years ago with Michelin," adds Alessia. "Michelin decided to enter their brand into the market of technical soles, not just in the motorcycle business but in terms of workwear, sportswear etc."

Michelin approached TCX as they were looking for a partner with a reputation for high standards of quality, innovative safety designs and a good distribution network – TCX ticked all of those boxes.

"In the beginning we were unsure whether this partnership could work but ultimately we decided that a partnership with Michelin would put an added value onto our products and would once again offer an innovative addition to the TCX collection."



## MICHELIN COMP EVO

When Michelin originally approached the designers over at TCX they said that it was a good idea and that Michelin could offer something new to the market. From that point TCX started development on two separate projects. One was an adventure boot and the other was an urban shoe.

"We are able to take the existing tire tread from a Michelin tyre, use its design and adjust the compound slightly in order to create a high quality motorcycle sole."

Both of those projects were well received, not just because of the marketing spin but because the promises that were made were maintained. The high quality was recognised as well the great grip and traction. This meant that the public really accepted the partnership with Michelin as a real added value to the products.

After that initial success, talks were held to begin development on a new off-road sole. The result is what you see on the new Comp Evo Michelin boot.

The Comp Evo Michelin is the top motocross boot that TCX have on offer. TCX don't plan on rolling out the Michelin sole for the entirety of their range but in fact they plan to keep the Michelin soles exclusive to their top end products.

This backs up the fact that the partnership with Michelin isn't just a clever marketing spin but in fact the cooperation with Michelin does actually add an extra level of quality to an already top notch product.

"TCX is a product company," agrees Alessia. "It is true that you cannot grow without a premium distributor network – which we have – and you cannot grow without the marketing strategy that we have but if we don't start with a truly great product than we are not going to reach the level that we want to reach with the good reputation, credibility and long term trust."

The Comp Evo, with the Michelin moulded sole, comes in seven different colour ways and the Comp Evo with the traditional stitched sole (which has been produced mainly for the old school Enduro riders and is slightly cheaper) comes in three colour ways.

Buckles are always an aspect that people struggle with – the buckles on the Comp Evo are very user friendly. They have been completely redesigned and restyled to ensure ease of use.

Another clever feature is the ability to adjust the shin plate, in or out, depending on the size of your calf/knee braces. This ensures the best fit for everyone.

## INNOVATION

As already touched upon TCX continuously try to come out with new and innovative products and designs – "TCX have always tried to be pioneers and we've always tried to lead the way with our products."

In 1999, when the company was just a young bambino, TCX (or Oxstar as it was then known) came onto the market with their TCS (Torsion Control System). This system could arguably be considered to be the key to the company's success in the early years. TCS was a patented system

that offered control to movement and flexibility and therefore helped prevent injuries. This was completely new and unheard of for boots at that time.

Similarly in 2002 TCX were the first company to offer a product that was completely tailor made and designed for women and the anatomic shape of a woman's foot.

The biggest success for TCX however came in 2011 when the company received the first CE certification for a motorcycle sneaker – many brands have followed in the path that TCX has paved.





## ATHLETES

Unlike many other brands TCX only support a select handful of professional racers. The biggest names that rock the TCX logos are Dylan Ferrandis and Broc Tickle. TCX like to get their athletes involved in the development process, listening to feedback in order to create the ultimate boot. In the near future however TCX do plan on expanding their presence in the professional motocross paddocks – the brand has already built strong ties with KTM and Husqvarna in the Enduro scene and look to do something similar in the MX/SX world.

Both Broc and Dylan have been involved with the development of the new Comp Evo, providing strong feedback on the feeling and comfort of the boot and providing information as to how things should feel when riding the bike. This helped the TCX development team create the boot that we see before us today.

## SAFETY AND COMFORT

As well as looking good the two main features that a boot must have is a high level of comfort and an even higher level of protection and support.

"The main safety feature of the Comp Evo is the double flex control system which is an evolution of the previously mentioned TCS system. The double flex control system controls the forwards and backwards flexibility at a limited degree of angle. This means that the boot provides a good flex forwards and an increased flexibility backwards- which was a strong request from TCX's test riders – however at a certain point the boot will stop flex in order to prevent over extension and reduce risk of injury to the ankles and especially the knee.

"The boot features a hard plastic shell to

provide impact protection. The logic here is to keep the protective elements of the boot on the outer shell whilst keeping the calf, ankle and foot surrounded by soft, comfortable material. The plastic outer shell has been designed to offer a mechanical movement which means that the boots can be taken out of the box and used straight away with little to no break in time."

TCX have been running demo/test days for the new Comp Evo and the strongest feedback they received was how little time it took for the boots to break in.

"The guys that tried the boots were impressed with the precision that they felt, the lightness, as well as the comfort of the boot."

In comparison to older TCX products the new Comp Evo has a slimmed down toe box in order to increase feeling on the bike. This new toe box design combined with the comfort lining within

the boot and several 'bedding' areas (thicker layers of lining) ensure an insanely comfy fit.

"I would say the strongest feature of this boot is the level of feeling that it provides. The moulded sole construction provides this great feeling and also means that the boot is one of the lightest in the market."

TCX are competing with very good brands and products in the boot market – and they know this – but it's safe to say that TCX and the new Comp Evo is most definitely up there with the best of them.

TCX are passionate about what they do and they are really quite proud of their products. They are boot specialists and that really shows in the quality of their range, and the Comp Evo Michelin is the pinnacle of that. I for one cannot wait to try them out.



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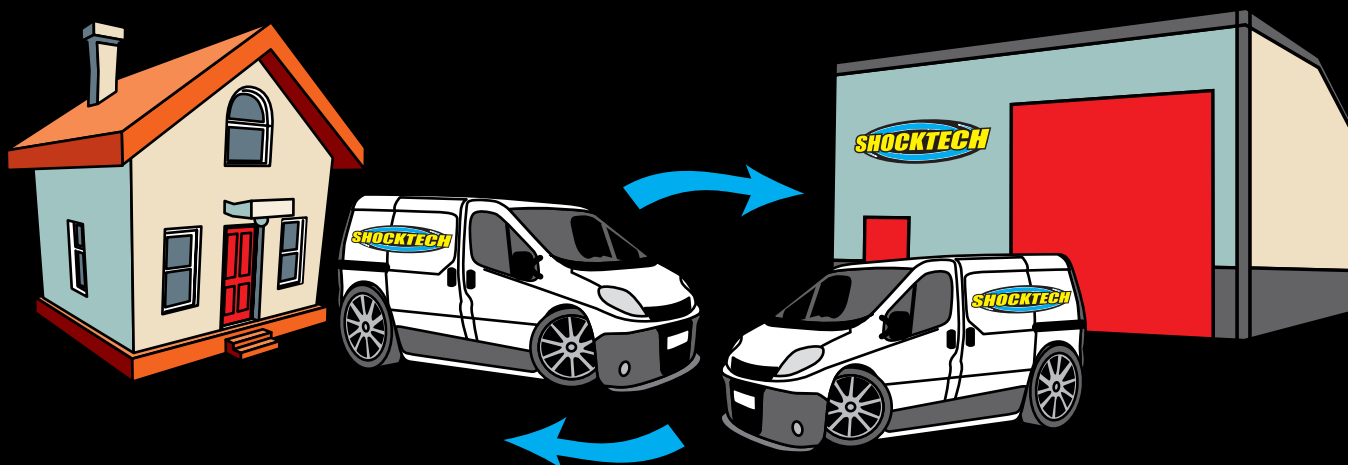
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Alexander and his dad get ready to race at FatCat

SPOTLIGHT ON...

# ALEXANDER BROWN #41

HOMETOWN: WHITBURN, WEST LoTHIAN. | DOB: 21/10/00 | SPONSORS: APICO HUSQVARNA, HUSQVARNA UK, APICO FACTORY RACING, PUTOLINE LUBRICANTS, HUSKY SPORT, PIRELLI TYRES, POLISPORT PLASTICS, ANSR CLOTHING, LEATT, 100%, TALON, BOYESEN, TWIN AIR, RENTHAL, HGS, GET, PRO-BOLT, GP GRAPHICS, TM BROOKS STEEL, COVERCLAD SERVICES, CNC DOORS, EPIC WINDOWS, THORNLEIGH FREIGHT, ELLARD MOTORS, EUROPPOWER, FUS, B&G GRINDING, A+A AUTOMATICS, EXCEL 2000, AMG, CONSTRUCTION SPECIALISTS

**B**ack in 2011 – and finishing that season as the clear cut BYMX and Red Bull 65cc champion – Alexander Brown really was 'Alexander the Great'. It's also worth mentioning that Alexander finished seventh in the world that year too. The following three seasons spent on 85s – with much injury disruption – can only be described as a tough time in the office.

That said, even with injuries fourth place championship finishes in both BYN and EYC SW85s resulted in 2012. The following year was a complete write off with a smashed ankle and then when leading both BYN and MX Nationals series in 2014 on BWs, a broken hand and a dislocated shoulder put paid to any hopes of silverware.

Throwing a leg over a much needed bigger machine in 2015 Zed took the British Youth National 125cc field apart winning all but one round, and claiming 21 individual moto wins on his way to the ACU title. This year there's another step up with more power to Apico Husqvarna 250F and so far he's ripping it up once again.

Looking back at his career when he's actually won a title he's absolutely demolished the field and he might be about to do it again. His season kicked off at Preston Docks with the opening round of the MX Nationals taking two wins out of four. One

magnificent charge through the field to win it from dead last had everyone talking and only an electrical problem prevented him claiming the series lead.

In the British Youth Nationals seven out of 10 moto wins at the opening two rounds really should be enough to be sitting pretty on top. Electrical gremlins at round one and then a blocked radiator at round two have cost him valuable points once again though.

In Maxxis MXY2 competition – the toughest challenge this year – two conclusive wins at the Lyng opening round sent out a powerful message. At Canada Heights for round two there was much closer match up – a battle royal with Henry Williams in moto one was won while a tasty scrap with Michael Ellis in moto two was narrowly lost. Running a 1-2 however meant another overall victory together with an increased series lead.

Rage asked Richard Clarke – team boss at Apico Husqvarna – how the deal with Zed Brown came about and where the young Scot is headed...

"It all started last year. Having success with Steven in the Maxxis and EMX 250 series I was chatting to Dave from Husqvarna UK about setting up a youth team to go along side our pro team.

"I had my eye on a local small wheeled rider Jack Lindsay and went to watch him at the last round of the British Youth Nationals at FatCat. I love watching grass roots youth racing, my favourite being the big wheel 85s and I spent most of the day watching.

"Taking in the 125cc class though I noticed Alexander, he looked strong, didn't seem to lose pace and made very few mistakes. I asked a few people about him and also rang Bryan MacKenzie to get his opinion. Bry Mac knows him well and doesn't live far away from him in Scotland. All the feedback was positive so after a bit of discussion with Zander and his Dad the deal was done.

"At the moment he's training well with Bry and Steven and we are going to take him to a couple of Euro rounds – most likely Mantova and Matterley – and see how that goes for him.

"Looking at the season so far he's probably meeting my expectations with so many wins under his belt already. We haven't set any targets for the year but he sets his own by winning every time he puts his leg over the bike. I've have initial talks already about next year and it could be that we take him Pro. With all the knowledge we have as a team, we could be a good stepping stone for where he wants to go."

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Rossi Beard is the Big Wheel class supremo



Callum Green in a pensive mood before moto one



Joel Rizzi edges ahead as the BW class leaves the line



Ike Carter and Bobby Bruce battle it out for the win

# NATIONAL THRUST!

THE BYN'S GET GOING IN FINE STYLE WITH ACTION PACKED ROUNDS AT FATCAT AND BRAMPTON...

**W**ith the opening two rounds at FatCat Motoparc and Brampton already done and dusted – and round three at Leuchars not until July – it's probably a really good time to report on Thor British Youth Nationals.

Over the two rounds, Charlie 'Hitman' Heyman has made the perfect start in the 65cc class – cruising all 10 race wins is somewhat classy. In his Auto days, Charlie white-washed a National campaign and I really wouldn't want to bet against him doing it again! In Charlie's wake there's a more competitive party going on as Alfie Jones tops the chasing pack.

AJ's bagged both overall runner up awards although number two at Brampton was a close run thing though, finishing just one point to the good over Kieran Boughen. Ollie Colmer was third placed on the box at FatCat and with Wal Beaney and Bailey Johnson also firing smartly they're a feisty bunch of chasers.

Up at the sharp end in the small wheels – and incidentally just as it is in other series too – it's all about Ike Carter (MBO Power) and Bobby Bruce. Between them in the BYN they have completely bossed it nailing five moto wins each. At FatCat – running in four majestic wins – Carter was King as Bruce nailed a single heat win. Then at Brampton as Carter suffered some grief Bobby Bruce had his A game running taking four heat wins to the one of Carter. A few mistakes at FatCat dropped Bruce down to fourth overall but following his Cumbrian masterclass, BB moves up into series second as Carter still leads.

Behind the dynamic duo, 11 year old TM pilot Jack Grayshon along with Apico Husqvarna's Jack Lindsay have caught the eye. Grayshon was runner up at FatCat and Lindsay has made both podiums in third overall. As the championship next hits Scotland it's Grayshon who holds series third with Lindsay close on his tail.

Following a jaw dropping charge through the field – passing every rider before winning heat two by a clear margin – Team Green tiger Lewis Hall was the talk of the BW class and just about everyone else at round one. There

was to be another heat win for Hall but slight inconsistency meant podium second as super smooth Rossi Beard topped the FatCat box. Calum Mitchell, Josh Peters, Eddie Wade and Sam Nunn rounded out the top six.

At round two – and with Hall away on Euro duties – it was RB#123 who once again excelled, this time pocketing three race wins to extend his series lead. EJW and Dom Lancett claimed the other two heat wins but with Wade docked five points for an apparent yellows transgression it was Calum Mitchell who eventually benefited by picking up second overall.

In the 125s it was a totally one-sided gig at FatCat as Callum Green blasted out all five wins. Brampton was totally the opposite as four different heat winners kept the number crunchers busy. SJP Moto runner Green arrived at round two as red hot favourite but a couple of unlucky incidents dented his title hopes.

"In race one I had a really bad start but managed to eventually pull through to finish second," explains Callum. "Race two was another bad start but I battled through all the way to the front – just when I thought I could make a pass for the lead, the bike broke – an electrical problem. Third time out I had a good start and was battling for the lead again. Then on the third lap someone had crashed on a jump – the marshal didn't put the flag out – the crash was blind to me and I hit his bike. I went flying into the fence dislocating my shoulder. Hopefully I'll be all good and ready for the next round. Thank you to all my sponsors and everyone who has stuck by me – I can't thank everyone enough."

Heat wins for Tom Grimshaw, Todd Ritchie, Slade Tressler and Harry Kimber meant a final heat decider. Winning heat five with another super show Grimshaw left absolutely nothing to chance, then in the closing stages rampant Ritchie got the better of Tressler. That pass handed the overall to TG and also meant a Yamaha lock out on the podium – Tressler claimed second overall with Ritchie third. Following his third overall finish at FatCat it's

American Tressler who now tops the table going to round three.

In the Youth Open section there's absolutely no doubt who's the balls out Billy Whizz – it's Apico Husqvarna prodigy Zander Brown. He's won seven out of 10 motos and finished fourth in another but a bit of bad luck means it's series third right now for him. Having recently joined the Justin Morris trained band of brothers, Dexter Douglas has notched up the other three moto wins. He was the round one runner-up and third overall in Cumbria which puts him in striking distance of table topping George Grigg-Pettitt.

A couple of months back Rage flagged up GGP as one to watch so it comes as no surprise he's kicking the jams out of this one. So far it's a real nice looking string of second and third place returns delivering both overall victories for the 15 year old. He's in the Carl Nunn trained camp and it's looking real good for them.

Henry Williams (RFX KTM) was a welcome addition to the talent pool at Brampton, his was another card full with second and third place returns – giving him podium second.

## SERIES STANDINGS

### 65cc

1 Charlie Heyman 450, 2 Alfie Jones 402, 3 Ollie Colmer 373, 4 Bailey Johnston 372, 5 Wal Beaney 360, 6 Kieran Boughen 353

### SW85

1 Ike Carter 730, 2 Bobby Bruce 674, 3 Jack Grayshon 644, 4 Jack Lindsay 637, 5 Drew McCreanor 570, 6 Louie Kessell 563

### BW85

1 Rossi Beard 708, 2 Calum Mitchell 642, 3 Eddie Jay Wade 625, 4 Josh Peters 580, 5 Dominic Lancett 578, 6 Sam Nunn 568

### 125cc

1 Slade Tressler 403, 2 Todd Ritchie 395, 3 Tom Grimshaw 373, 4 Harry Kimber 364, 5 Ben Clark 364, 6 Jake Winnard 332

### Youth Open

1 George Grigg Pettitt 416 pts, 2 Dexter Douglas 405, 3 Alexander Brown 379, 4 David Galvin 359, 5 Brett Pocock 349, 6 Jed Etchells 323







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SPOTLIGHT ON...

# JOEL RIZZI #912

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**A**s an aspiring eight year old, Joel Rizzi first popped up on the Rage radar back in the summer of 2012 – rattling the 65cc cage most notably in that year's EYC series. As 2013 progressed – and with an eventual third place championship finish in the BYNats – it was clear JR was fully equipped to be a one day National Champion.

While in the middle of an epic 2014 ACU head-to-head with eventual 65cc champion Eddie Jay Wade, Joel's season unluckily ended abruptly with injury. That could have been a first National title at 10 and last year campaigning for Team Green Kawasaki it was a similar tale of injury that curtailed his rookie SW class thrash.

Injury was the obvious low point last year but race wins in both the MX and Pirelli Nationals kept Joel in the spotlight. Stepping up to the Big Wheel class – and with a move back to KTM roots – his 2016 National season got off to an absolute flier, claiming overall victory at Preston Docks. With the likes of Lewis Hall and Sam Price not able to match

Rizzi's brace of moto wins in the MX Nationals all the signs were good as JR next headed off to British Youth Nationals.

At FatCat for round one, Rossi Beard and Team Green's Hall claimed day one wins but as day two kicked off, it was actually young Mr Rizzi who was leading the championship at the midway point in moto three.

"Round one of the BYN started off perfect with second in qualifying and two second place finishes in the Saturday races," says Joel. "Race three I was leading with a few laps to go and then got high sided on the fastest corner on the track. I tried to carry on but my wrist was hurting too much – thankfully nothing was broken!"

At Brompton an electrical fault on day two ended any chance of a podium finish but fifth overall with a best of second in heat two was another promising show from 12 year old Joel.

For a comparative look at where Joel is right now it's fair to say he hasn't had anywhere near

the impact of say Ben Watson or Conrad Mewse. That said, it's worth remembering if he decided to take on Europe next year – and was doing well with podium finishes – he wouldn't be too far off where Conrad was and at roughly the same age. It could still be all to play for JR #912.



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